

# London School of Economics and Political Science

## *National Parliamentary Scrutiny of European Union Affairs: Explaining Divergence of Formal Arrangements and Actual Activity*

Julian M. Hörner

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## **Abstract**

The role of national parliaments in the European Union (EU) has gained prominence in the last decade among academics and practitioners alike in relation to the alleged democratic deficit of the EU. The existing literature has largely focused on the formal powers of national parliaments. However, the formally strongest parliaments are not necessarily the most active, and vice versa. This thesis argues that this divergence between formal rights and actual activity exists because not formal scrutiny powers, but public Euroscepticism, the presence of parties for which Europe is salient and which care deeply about Europe ('issue entrepreneurs') as well as internal party cohesion on the EU are the most important factors influencing activity. Public Euroscepticism leads to more debate and resolutions when issue entrepreneurs are present and when parties have a coherent position on Europe. Recent measures and future plans to further increase the formal powers of national parliaments might not lead to more activity and might thus not help to ameliorate the democratic deficit. Methodologically, this thesis relies on computer-assisted content analysis, multilevel models as well as elite interviews. Each of the three papers focuses on a different aspect of parliamentary activity. The first paper focuses on the 'communication function' of parliaments and presents an analysis of parliamentary debates in EU affairs. The second paper quantitatively analyses the determinants of parliamentary activity in the form of resolutions, relating to the government control or 'scrutiny function'. The third paper investigates parliamentary scrutiny activity in-depth in a case study of the 'Fiscal Compact'. The thesis argues that national parliaments should mostly concentrate on their communication function in EU affairs, while other functions might best be carried out by the European Parliament. It thus suggests that different parliamentary functions can best be fulfilled by different institutions in the EU multilevel system.

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## Table of Contents

<b>Declaration.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>List of Tables .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>List of Figures.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>9</b>
The Research ‘Puzzle’ and the Main Argument of the Thesis.....	9
The Democratic Deficit, De-parliamentarisation and Accountability.....	16
Cross-National Variation in Formal Scrutiny Systems .....	21
The Rankings of Formal Powers of National Parliaments.....	22
Towards an Analysis of Scrutiny Practice .....	30
The Crucial Role of Issue Entrepreneurs.....	36
Challenges to the Definitions of Issue Entrepreneurship and Euroscepticism.....	43
Different Forms of Activity and Parliamentary Functions.....	48
Methodological Approaches and Plan of the Thesis .....	58
Concluding Remarks .....	66
<b>Paper 1: The Determinants of Debate on EU Affairs in National Parliaments: The Role of Party Politics and Party Cohesion.....</b>	<b>68</b>
Abstract .....	68
Introduction .....	69
Theory and Hypotheses .....	72
Method and Data .....	79
Analysis and Results .....	85
The Parliamentary Level.....	85
The Party Level.....	95
Discussion and Conclusion .....	98
Appendix 1: Examples of EU and General Keywords.....	101
Appendix 2: Descriptive Statistics .....	102
Appendix 3: Robustness Checks .....	103
<b>Paper 2: The Determinants of Resolutions of National Parliaments in EU Affairs .....</b>	<b>111</b>
Abstract .....	111

Introduction .....	112
Parliamentary Control of the Government and Resolutions as a Focus of Analysis.	114
Method and Case Selection .....	118
Theory and Hypotheses .....	122
Data and Model .....	129
Analysis and Results .....	133
Discussion and Conclusion .....	138
Appendix 4: Resolutions in the five countries .....	141
Appendix 5: Coding Scheme for Resolutions .....	142
Appendix 6: Examples of Resolutions by issue entrepreneurs and mainstream parties - Relative lengths of different parts of motions and resolutions .....	143
Appendix 7: Descriptive Statistics .....	149
Appendix 8: Robustness Checks Resolutions .....	150
<b>Paper 3: Parliamentary Scrutiny and the Fiscal Compact: Issue Entrepreneurs, Parliamentary Activity and Effectiveness.....</b>	<b>160</b>
Abstract .....	160
Introduction .....	161
Theoretical Framework: The Driving Force of Issue Entrepreneurs.....	162
Method and Case Selection .....	168
Activities of National Parliaments in Scrutinising the Fiscal Compact .....	171
The Role of Issue Entrepreneurs and their Communication Strategies .....	171
The Reaction of Government Parties to the Activity of Issue Entrepreneurs .....	175
The Bargaining Strategies of Mainstream Opposition Parties .....	177
The Interplay of Internal Dissent and Public Opinion .....	181
The Effectiveness of Parliamentary Involvement .....	184
Discussion and Conclusion .....	187
Appendix 9: List of Interviewees .....	192
<b>Conclusion: The Determinants of the Activity of National Parliaments in EU Affairs and their Implications.....</b>	<b>193</b>
Empirical Contribution.....	194
Theoretical Contribution .....	196
Limitations and Potential for Future Research .....	202
Normative Implications .....	207
<b>References .....</b>	<b>212</b>

## List of Tables

Table 1: Rankings of formal scrutiny powers of national parliaments in European Union affairs.....	28
Table 2: Incentives for issue entrepreneurs and mainstream parties to become active in European Union affairs .....	41
Table 3: Effects of the independent variables on the share of EU keywords of all words at the parliamentary level .....	90
Table 4: Results of the analysis at the party level .....	95
Table 5: List of keywords used for the content analysis .....	101
Table 7: Descriptive statistics for the independent variables (country level) .....	102
Table 8: Descriptive Statistics for the party level .....	102
Table 9: Robustness checks for the analysis of debates at the parliamentary level .....	105
Table 10: Robustness checks for the analysis of debates excluding country cases .....	107
Table 11: Robustness checks for the analysis of debates at the party level .....	109
Table 12: Results of the statistical analysis of resolutions .....	131
Table 13: The committees covered, legal acts counted as resolutions and the time frame of the analysis for the different countries. ....	141
Table 14: Descriptive statistics for the analysis of resolutions .....	149
Table 15: Robustness check for the analysis of resolutions using issue entrepreneur score as dummy .....	152
Table 16: Robustness check resolutions for the analysis of resolutions using CMP scores .....	154
Table 17: Robustness check resolutions for the analysis of resolutions using CMP party families .....	156
Table 18: Robustness check resolution for with random intercepts at the level of CMP party families.....	158
Table 19: Types of issue entrepreneurs .....	163
Table 20: Strategies employed by the different actors in the scrutiny process .....	167
Table 21: Name and function of the interviewees, date and mode of communication .....	192

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Change of the percentage of EU keywords relative to all keywords in the general dictionary over time by country .....	87
Figure 2: Marginal effect of Euroscepticism on the share of EU keywords at different values of the issue entrepreneur score.....	92
Figure 3: Marginal effect of Euroscepticism on the share of EU keywords at different levels of internal dissent .....	94
Figure 4: Effect of the issue entrepreneurship score of a party on the effect of popular Euroscepticism on the number of resolutions per month. ....	135



## **Introduction**

### **The Research ‘Puzzle’ and the Main Argument of the Thesis**

In the European Union (EU), citizens can provide democratic input via two channels: first, they can directly elect the members of the European Parliaments (EP); secondly, citizens can make their voices heard via an indirect route of democratic control which runs from the citizens to their national parliaments and from the national parliaments to the national governments. The national governments are, in turn, represented in the Council of Ministers. The transfer of powers from the national to the European level has weakened the power of national parliaments. This process is termed ‘de-parliamentarisation’ (Holzhacker, 2002; Maurer and Wessels, 2001; Moravcsik, 1994). National parliaments have been losing out from European integration in various ways – European integration allows the government to manipulate the domestic agenda, an increasing number of laws is made at the European level and national parliaments are faced with an information deficit (Moravcsik, 1994, p. 8-10). Even though consecutive treaty changes have strengthened the EP significantly, it still cannot fulfil the same legitimising function as a parliament in a national political system. The reason for this lack of legitimacy is that no European ‘demos’ exists which the EP could represent (Chryssochou, 1998; Kiiver 2012; Schmitter, 2000; Siedentrop, 2001). This implies that there is currently no ‘common political identity which serves as a basis upon which all governmental or parliamentary decisions can be interpreted as being expressions of democratic self-determination’ (Decker, 2002, p. 258). This dual lack of legitimacy – the loss of power of national parliaments and a still relatively weak European Parliament that cannot completely compensate for these losses – is said to constitute what is called the ‘democratic deficit’ of the European Union.

The perceived loss of powers of national parliaments due to European integration led to a debate in many countries on how this loss of influence could be remedied, especially since the Treaty of Maastricht (e.g. Maurer and Wessels, 2001; O'Brennan and Raunio, 2007). In all member states, over the last two decades, the formal powers of national parliaments in EU affairs have been significantly increased, albeit to varying extents. A common feature was the establishment of European Affairs Committees (EACs) to oversee the government in EU affairs in all EU member states (Hix and Raunio, 2000). The extent to which parliaments receive information on EU legal acts and negotiations was also increased in many countries (Karlas, 2011, p. 259).

Politicians and academics alike hoped that stronger formal rights would lead to more active oversight by Members of Parliament (MPs) in EU affairs, and thus an improvement in accountability (Maurer, 2001, p. 30). This optimism might not have been justified. Some studies present anecdotal evidence that the formal strength of a parliament does not determine how scrutiny takes place in practice. As a case in point, the Austrian parliament seems to be rather passive, even though it has very strong formal rights (Hegeland and Neuhold, 2002; Pollack and Smolinski, 2003, 2012). Similarly, Sprungk finds that the French Parliament seems to be more active than its German counterpart, even though it has weaker formal powers (Sprungk, 2003, 2007). Formal powers and actual activity are thus not necessarily congruent; there can be divergence between the two. Positive divergence is evident when a parliament is more active than its formal powers would suggest. In contrast, negative divergence exists when a parliament is less active than its position according to its formal powers, as described in the literature, indicates. This paradox and empirical puzzle gives rise to the following research questions:

*What determines the activity of parliamentary scrutiny in practice? and Why are some parliaments more active than others, even though they have weaker formal rights?*

The main argument of this thesis is that the extent to which Europe is seen as salient and as critical by the parties in parliament – and thus the extent to which they can be regarded as ‘issue entrepreneurs’ – is the most important determinant of parliamentary activity in EU affairs with regard to both the communication and the scrutiny function. In the present context, issue entrepreneurs are defined as parties for which European integration is salient and which are Eurosceptic (Hobolt and De Vries, 2015, p. 3). If issue entrepreneurs are strongly represented in parliament (both in the plenary and in committees), then more parliamentary debates about Europe take place in the plenary and more resolutions are issued on the topic. The reason for this is that the preferences of issue entrepreneur parties are more in line with the preferences of the voters, than in the case of divided mainstream parties. Formal powers of national parliaments in EU affairs do not seem to play an important role in determining their actual activity in the form of resolutions or debates. The analysis offered here can thus explain the divergence between the formal rights of national parliaments in EU affairs and their actual activity. In so doing, the thesis differentiates itself from existing work in the subfield of the study of the role of national parliaments in the European Union.

As a consequence, a rather mixed picture of the causal chain of formal powers of national parliaments, activity in EU affairs and actual effectiveness of scrutiny emerges. Formal powers of national parliaments do not seem to influence actual activity, so the hope that increasing formal powers of national parliaments in EU affairs will help to alleviate the democratic deficit of the EU is unfounded. At the same time, actual activity is the consequence of Eurosceptic tendencies in the electorate and at the party level.

However, such activity does not translate into actual effectiveness: the parties, which are most active often issue resolutions which are mostly political ‘smoke and mirrors’ and include relatively little substantive scrutiny. Nevertheless, the presence of issue entrepreneurs increases the extent to which parliament is reactive to the voters’ preferences on EU affairs and the extent to which the topic is debated in the plenary – thus helping parliament to communicate EU affairs to the citizens.

In the first paper of this thesis on parliamentary debates, it becomes clear that issue entrepreneurs are the most important determinants of debates on Europe, which are an expression of the ‘communication function’ of parliaments (Norton, 1993). When the public is Eurosceptic, a lot of debate on Europe takes place if the presence of issue entrepreneurs in the plenary is strong. Issue entrepreneurs try to exploit the fact that they are more in line with their electorate on the issue of Europe than other parties and trigger debates on Europe. In contrast, parties which are internally divided on Europe tend to be less active when faced with strong public Euroscepticism to prevent this division from becoming apparent. Issue entrepreneurs can thus be seen as the drivers of debate on Europe.

However, the analysis shows that parliaments are responsive to major events such as Treaty changes and discuss these extensively. Moreover, they are also reactive to the voters’ opinion on the European Union with regard to the extent to which they debate it in the plenary. This responsiveness only becomes apparent when issue entrepreneurs are represented in parliament. These parties force the mainstream parties in debates on Europe, which the latter would like to avoid. In that sense, the presence of issue entrepreneurs has a positive effect from a normative perspective in that it forces parliament as a whole to take its communication function in EU affairs seriously.

In the second paper on the activity of national parliaments in the form of resolutions, which relate to their government ‘control and scrutiny’ function (Norton, 1993), it becomes evident that issue entrepreneurs are also the drivers of this form of activity. When the presence of issue entrepreneurs is strong, more resolutions are issued in the context of strong public Euroscepticism. The opposite is the case for pro-European parties. Moreover, issue entrepreneurs clearly initiate much more critical resolutions than mainstream parties. In addition, the resolutions of issue entrepreneurs contain longer preambles and shorter operational parts, indicating that they focus more on general political points than on actual technical scrutiny. The actual ‘depth’ of scrutiny of resolutions initiated by these parties is thus limited. In contrast to other studies (Auel, Rozenberg and Tacea, 2015), no relationship between the formal powers of parliaments and their activity in the form of resolutions could be found.

The findings of this study with regard to the government control function of parliament are thus less encouraging from a normative point of view. The presence of issue entrepreneurs seems to prevent parliaments from performing in-depth scrutiny of particular legal acts. Issue entrepreneurs thus seem to have a differentiated impact with regard to the different parliamentary functions. For the government control or scrutiny function, the issue entrepreneurs seem to prevent thorough scrutiny from taking place, which has a detrimental impact on democratic accountability in the EU.

The third paper, a case study on the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union (TSCG), commonly referred to as the Fiscal Compact, confirms the results of the quantitative analyses. Issue entrepreneurs have indeed politicized the debate on the Treaty and were especially active in the form of debates and resolutions. However, as expected from the findings of the two quantitative papers, issue entrepreneurs frequently connect policy-specific

discussions to more general criticism on the European Union and contribute little with regard to actual technical scrutiny. They often use extra-parliamentary venues, such as judicial review or public demonstrations. The media covered the activity of issue-entrepreneurs with regard to the Fiscal Compact disproportionately. However, it can be argued that given the focus on political issues and the lack of focus on technical points, the type of activity initiated by issue entrepreneurs does not frequently lead to more effective scrutiny. By contrast, mainstream opposition parties are rather more active and focus on technical points. They often try to extract concessions by the government on smaller technical points by engaging in ‘side payments’ when their votes are required because of specific thresholds, such as in the case of the Fiscal Compact. MPs of the government majority very rarely become active in a critical way. A clear exception here is the UK, where the Eurosceptic EU Scrutiny Committee of the House of Commons is frequently very critical of the government. The case of the United Kingdom also shows that when internal dissent in a party is very high, as in the case of the Conservative Party, scrutiny activity increases. The reason for this is that the party leadership is no longer able to effectively suppress dissent. In general, strong technical expertise on an issue and resources for thorough technical and legal analysis contribute to more in-depth scrutiny. These factors are more likely to be found among mainstream (opposition) parties than among issue entrepreneurs. The third paper also shows that even mainstream parties engage in less ‘in-depth’ scrutiny when increased politicisation leads to the overburdening of a committee and the crowding out of time and resources.

The findings of this thesis thus provide limited evidence to support the hope that an increase in formal powers of national parliaments in EU affairs will lead to more activity, which will in turn lead to more effective scrutiny which will help national parliaments to improve democratic accountability in the European Union. In contrast,

this thesis holds that formal powers, activity and effectiveness are separately influenced by a number of factors, which are not necessarily interlinked. Thus, an increase in formal powers of national parliaments can be seen as a consequence of normative considerations by parliamentary actors (Winzen, 2014, p. 2). These considerations include the extent to which national parliaments or the European Parliament is seen as the best venue to alleviate the democratic deficit of the European Union and the general perception of the desirability of European integration (ibid.). However, reform efforts are constrained by existing parliamentary rules and institutions (ibid.). As explained above, the actual activity of national parliaments is then not explained by their formal powers, but by the presence of issue entrepreneurs in the party system, internal party cohesion and public Euroscepticism. The activity of national parliaments in EU affairs is thus not directly influenced by their formal powers.

Moreover, activity does not directly translate into effectiveness, given that activity is mostly driven by issue entrepreneur parties which focus more on political issues rather than on technical scrutiny. These parties do, however, bring about more debate on Europe in the plenary. Generally, a more positive picture emerges of national parliaments in debating EU affairs than in directly controlling the government in that matter. This finding is in line with earlier claims in the literature that parliaments can have a stronger impact with regard to the communication function and should rather concentrate on the latter rather than the government control or scrutiny function (Auel, 2007, p. 504). In the following section, it is elaborated how the debate on the democratic deficit and de-parliamentarisation in the European Union provides the rationale for this thesis and how this thesis contributes to the debates on these topics.

## **The Democratic Deficit, De-parliamentarisation and Accountability**

This section will briefly outline the literature on the democratic deficit, accountability and the connected claim that national parliaments have lost power due to de-parliamentarisation. The de-parliamentarisation thesis serves as the normative justification and motivation for a stronger involvement of national parliaments in EU affairs. Arguably, a stronger involvement of national parliaments could increase the democratic legitimacy of the EU. However, as it will be shown, the formal powers of national parliaments are not crucial to achieve more accountability, but the extent to which parliaments get actively involved depends on the presence of issue entrepreneurs and internal dissent. The literature on the democratic deficit, de-parliamentarisation and accountability gives rise to the need to study the actual activity of national parliaments in EU affairs. The debate on the role of national parliaments in the EU and their different institutional structures and forms of involvement is not only informed by an academic interest in explaining institutional and behavioural variation. The discussion is in fact closely related to the question of whether there is indeed a ‘democratic deficit’ in the European Union.

The claim that parliaments are losing power, also called the de-parliamentarisation thesis, did not only emerge in the context of European integration or the discipline of European Studies, but has been articulated since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Bryce, 1931, in Auel, 2011, p. 75). In the 1970s, comparativists observed that legislatures were losing power vis-à-vis the executive, and diagnosed patterns of variation between countries for this phenomenon (Blondel, 1970). One reason identified for this ‘decline of parliaments’ was the increasing complexity of policy making in modern capitalist societies as a consequence of modernisation and industrialisation,



which favour the executive with its specialised bureaucracy over the legislature (Andersen and Burns, 1996). As a second reason, some authors identified the rise of cohesive parties which mitigate the role of the individual legislator (Heidar and Koole, 2003; King, 1976). Lindseth even argues that the decline of parliaments started a century ago, with the onset of World War I, which led to a concentration of power in the hands of the executive (Lindseth, 2010, p. 64). Thus, there was a general shift of power from legislatures to executives.

European integration might well be a factor aggravating the process of de-parliamentarisation. Moravcsik (1994) points out that national parliaments lose power due to European integration for four different reasons. First, European integration allows the government to manipulate the domestic agenda, by presenting unpopular measures as the product of pressures from the European level – ‘blameshift’ as part of what Putnam calls the ‘two-level game’ (p. 8). Second, a large amount of domestic laws is made at the European level, and national parliaments can only make minor changes at the implementation stage (in the case of directives) (p. 10). Third, national parliaments suffer from a severe information asymmetry in European affairs: since the governments are involved in EU negotiations and have strong contacts to EU institutions via their permanent representations in Brussels, they are much better informed than national parliaments (p.12). Finally, on the ideational level, the influence of European integration might increase the support for certain government policies (p.13). The claim that national parliaments lose power due to European integration – or Europeanisation, even though not explicitly framed as such – has been the implicit assumption of much of the work on the role of national parliaments.

Other authors have challenged the idea that parliaments are clearly ‘losers’ of European integration. Hix and Raunio (2000) have argued that backbenchers have been

able to ‘fight back’, even though the authors do not dispute that national parliaments have generally lost influence since the 1950s and that the EU aggravated this process (p. 163). They argue that European integration has triggered institutional reform in national parliaments – most notably the establishment of European Affairs Committees (EACs) – that has allowed parliaments to regain their powers (p. 163). Backbenchers and opposition MPs have been able to close the ‘information gap’ mostly by targeted and specialised committee work, according to Hix and Raunio (p. 162). Dunia and Oliver are even more sceptical regarding the alleged negative effects of European integration for national parliaments than the aforementioned study and argue that European integration has even significantly strengthened the powers of national parliaments (Dunia and Oliver, 2005). According to these authors, European integration has acted as a ‘catalyst’ for the developments of the power of national parliaments (p 176).

Arguably, processes of de-parliamentarisation have been exacerbated by the Eurozone crisis. In the context of the Eurozone-crisis, the European Council as the forum of heads of states and government has become increasingly important and more and more involved in details of economic policy making (Bickerton, Hodson and Puetter, 2014, p. 712). This tendency has further disadvantaged the position of national parliaments in the European Union vis-à-vis their governments (Auel and Hoeing, 2015, p. 376). As a reaction to this further loss of powers, national parliaments have received increasingly strong rights in overseeing the governments’ involvement in economic policy making at the European level, with the German Bundestag being a prime example (Hoeing, 2012). Previous studies on the involvement of national parliaments in the Euro crisis have claimed that the formal powers of parliaments in EU affairs and the macro-economic situation in a country are the most important determinants of

parliamentary activity in the context of the Eurozone crisis (Auel and Hoeing, 2015, p. 386, 389).

While the Euro-crisis has reshaped the relationship between national parliaments and executives, it has also led to important changes of the scrutiny rights of parliament in the plenary and in specialised committees themselves. Throughout the EU, Eurosceptic parties have increased their vote share in a number of member states, while public opinion on the European Union grew increasingly sceptical (Eurobarometer, 2015). Governments thus find themselves in a classic two-level game (Putnam, 1988) when negotiating questions of EMU (Bellamy and Weale, 2015, p. 260). They have to be reliable negotiation partners at the European level but must simultaneously be accountable and responsive to the constituents (*ibid.*).

A further increase in the powers of national parliaments has been proposed to solve this dilemma (*ibid.*). The rationale behind this suggestion is that further inter-parliamentary cooperation would guarantee ‘that EU measures treat each of the member states with equal concern and respect as self-governing polities’ (p. 272). However, as this thesis will make clear, the crisis has exacerbated dynamics with regard to the activity of Eurosceptic issue entrepreneurs in national parliaments which makes it even more unlikely that the formal powers of national parliaments will be extensively used in a constructive way. The impact of the crisis on the six countries covered in this thesis has been varied – including a debtor countries such as Ireland and Spain as well as a creditor country such as Germany. As Paper 1 shows, there has been an increase in activity in the form of debates in times of crisis. Paper 3 focuses extensively on the Fiscal Compact, and also discusses general dynamics of parliamentary activity in times of crisis. In general, the inclusion of the time period of the crisis arguably strengthens the argument of this thesis: powers of parliaments and their actual activity became ever

more apparent. On the one hand, government backbenchers and mainstream opposition parties find themselves faced with increasingly centralised decision making processes at the level of the European Council and the expectation of the public of playing an active role in controlling the former. On the other hand, Eurosceptic parties – sometimes new entrants, sometimes existing for some time and having discovered Europe as a pertinent issue in the context of the crisis- claim to be in line with the electorate and ‘common sense’ arguments regarding the handling of the crisis. These parties have thus much more leeway than mainstream parties in framing the issue of Europe for their purposes

The present thesis takes the theme of de-parliamentarisation and the response of an increase in formal scrutiny rights as a motivation for a study on the role of national parliaments in the EU in practice, i.e. their activity. Thus, de-parliamentarisation is a key concept which is necessary to understand the argument of this thesis. Studies which focus exclusively on formal rights tend to generate an overly optimistic picture of parliaments’ influence. Therefore, it is important to highlight the inconsistencies between formal rights and actual activity, as the present thesis does. If formal rights do not significantly influence the actual activity of parliaments, there is little use in constantly increasing their powers, as has happened continuously in the last two decades. It is necessary to rethink the way parliamentary input in the EU can be increased. An important aspect would be an increase in public deliberation on the EU in the form of parliamentary debates. Tans argues that national parliaments, especially through an increase in the number of debates on European issues – and thus more publicity for discussions on Europe – could help to increase the democratic legitimacy of the European Union (2007, p. 246). The present thesis acknowledges this point and focuses especially on the debates in Europe in the national parliaments’ plenaries, since this public form of scrutiny is the most important way in which national parliaments can

help to increase transparency and legitimacy in the EU (Auel, 2007, p. 504). As becomes clear in this thesis, parliamentary activity driven by issue entrepreneurs is generally more successful in communicating EU issues than in overseeing the government. The communication function might be the aspect of parliamentary activity in which national parliaments can have a bigger impact in EU affairs (ibid.).

A second key factor to overcome the democratic deficit by the involvement of national parliaments is to increase the accountability of national government to their parliaments in EU affairs (Auel, 2009, p. 14). Bovens argues that

Accounting for oneself, taking responsibility, and justifying oneself, never, (...) happen in a vacuum; there is always something or someone who asks the question or makes the accusations. Such asking happens mostly at the instigation and in the presence of some forum (...)’ (Bovens, 1998, p. 23; emphasis in original).

The forum, in the present context, is a parliamentary committee or the plenary. Accountability is seen here as the extent to which the government justifies its actions in front of parliament. The parliament can force the government to do so by producing detailed resolutions and memoranda. Even though the government will not necessarily adopt the position of the parliament, it will have to justify why it did not do so and will have to explain its alternative course of action to the parliament (Sprungk, 2010, p. 10). As becomes clear in the following sections, exploring the potential for the involvement of national parliaments in this process is part of the motivation of this thesis.

## **Cross-National Variation in Formal Scrutiny Systems**

This section reviews the literature on the formal powers of parliaments which is used as a baseline for the comparison of formal powers and actual activity. Early studies

concentrated mostly on the US Congress. Since the 1970s, scholars have explicitly studied the role of national parliaments in EU affairs. These early studies were mostly descriptive, but offered first hints that formal rights and actual activity might diverge. Scholars then compiled rankings of formal powers of national parliaments in EU affairs. These form an important baseline for assessing the impact of formal rights on actual activity. Formal rights are used as a control variable in the analyses, to assess whether formal rights or party political variables can explain variation in scrutiny activity. The position of the respective parliaments will be derived from the rankings in the literature (summarised in Table 1 on p. 28 below). If formal rights do not determine scrutiny activity, but issue entrepreneurs do, it is clear why formal rights and actual activity frequently diverge. In contrast to this thesis, most authors assume that formal rights can be lead to actual activity.

### *The Rankings of Formal Powers of National Parliaments*

As a next stage of the research agenda, scholars tried to generate ‘rankings’ of the formal rights of rights of national parliaments in EU affairs. Scholarship on formal rights of national parliaments in EU affairs is very important for the present project, since these rankings present the benchmark from which the formal powers can be operationalised as a control variable in the analysis of actual scrutiny activity in the papers.

One of the first attempts to categorise different scrutiny arrangements, according to their formal scrutiny power was undertaken by Bergman (1997; [Bergman I]). He introduced three relatively simple criteria which distinguish different formal scrutiny arrangements. The criteria are related to the following questions: first, do the

participation rights of parliament cover all EU policy areas, or are they restricted to the 'First Pillar' (the former EEC)? Second, is the full parliament (i.e. the chamber as a whole) involved, or only a specialised committee? Finally, how binding is the power of the parliament's mandate? Bergman distinguished three different levels of mandating power: the first level (1) merely describes an exchange of information. The vast majority of chambers can be found in this category. Level two (2) implies that under normal circumstances the governments will follow the recommendation of the EAC. Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK fall in this category. Finally, level three (3) implies that the government is bound to the policy formulated by the EAC. The only parliaments in this category are the parliaments of Austria and Germany. In a paper published in 2000, Bergman updated his typology (Bergman, 2000; [Bergman II]). Based on his own estimates he ranks the member states on a scale from 1-15 (p. 418). The *Folketing* of Denmark is ranked first, while the Parliament of Greece is seen as the weakest chamber.

A first step in the direction of a more encompassing framework was the work by Maurer and Wessels (2001). First, they analyse the extent to which rules for the involvement of parliaments are institutionalised or informal. This is operationalised as the existence of an EAC and the ratio of the size of the EAC and the chamber (p. 438). Second, they mention the extent of documents which are forwarded to the parliament (scope) (p. 440). Third, Maurer and Wessels analyse the arrangements set in place to filter and select documents for the chambers to avoid them from being 'swamped' (p. 439). Finally, the timing and management of the scrutiny process, i.e. the point in time when the parliaments receive the documents from the government, is taken into account (p. 446). Based on these considerations, Maurer and Wessels divide the parliaments in four groups. The first group, 'national players', have a real impact on their government

(Denmark and Austria). The next categories are called ‘latent national players’ (Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden) and ‘would be national players’, who are unable to challenge their government (France, the UK, Belgium, Spain and Luxemburg). The parliaments of Greece, Portugal, Ireland and Italy arguably do not have any means to influence their governments’ positions – they are ‘slow adaptors’ (Goetz and Meyer-Sahling, 2008, p. 7). Besides this assessment of ‘power’, Maurer and Wessels also group parliaments according to their different means of carrying out scrutiny. They distinguish between the constellation in which the parliament is active (EAC, standing committees, or plenary), the nature of scrutiny (supportive or challenging the government) and the phase in the policy cycle at which the parliament becomes active (ex ante, before the legal act is voted on in the Council, or ex-post, after the votes has taken place) (Maurer and Wessels, 2001).

Many of the later rankings build on the work by Maurer and Wessels. Rauino (2005) adopts their approach, but modifies some aspects of it. His first indicator is the involvement of specialised committees (p. 321). The involvement of standing committees is particularly strong in Finland, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and Sweden (ibid.). The second indicator Raunio lists is access to information. This indicator is subdivided in timing and scope, i.e. the range of documents that is transferred to parliament. Raunio’s third indicator is the extent to which the parliament can give ministers a binding mandate. The first indicator is based on Bergman’s work (2000), and the latter two on Maurer and Wessels’ volume (2001). Based on these indicators, Raunio calculates the overall scrutiny power of the parliaments in the form of fuzzy-set scores for his subsequent Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA; see Ragain, 2008). The highest value here is 0.83 and is reached by Denmark and Finland (p. 324). Austria and Sweden reach 0.67, Germany and the Netherlands 0.5, France and



the UK 0.33 and all remaining parliaments 0.17. No parliament receives the highest value of 1 or the lowest possible value of 0. Raunio finds that the domestic strength of parliaments and public Euroscepticism are the most important factors contributing to strong formal scrutiny powers (p. 336).

All the rankings mentioned above only covered the ‘old’ member states. Karlas published the first real overview including the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) (2011) which was later extended to include all member states (2012). He developed a very encompassing set of indicators to assess the formal ‘powers’ of parliaments. First, Karlas takes into account the scope, i.e. whether EU legislative proposal and/or the governments negotiation position are scrutinised, for which he assigns a parliament between 0 and 2 points (p. 1101). Second, he examines whether EU legal acts are only scrutinised in EACs or also in standing committees (ibid). Third, Karlas analyses the influence mechanisms, for example regarding whether mandates are frequently adopted or whether a scrutiny reserve is used (ibid.). Fourth, he establishes the extent to which the parliamentary mandate is binding (ibid.). Finally, Karlas takes into account whether the upper chamber of parliament is involved in the process as well (ibid.). The scores are then added up with twelve points being the highest achievable score. Karlas then ranks the parliaments accordingly (p. 1102). He finds that the member states joining in 2004 adopted rather strong formal scrutiny systems (p. 1109). According to Karlas, strong committees systems and a fragmented party system are the most important determinants of the formal powers of national parliaments in EU affairs (p. 1110).

More recently, Winzen has conducted a quantitative meta-analysis of the development of formal scrutiny systems over time (2012). He collected data on the formal scrutiny systems from the various country case studies available and brought the

descriptions into a comparable format. His main focus lies with information rights, the involvement of EACs and sectoral committees as well as on mandating rights (p. 661). Winzen aggregates the values on these points and then compares the formal strength of parliaments on a scale from 0 (minimum) to 3 (maximum) (p. 662). The collection of data on formal powers over a longer period of time represents a very important empirical contribution, and is very helpful for the present research project, as a benchmark for the formal strength of national parliaments. The present thesis aims to show that it is not formal rights, but party political and public opinion factors that are the most important determinants of scrutiny activity. Winzen finds that the depths of integrations and public Euroscepticism are the most important factors influencing formal scrutiny powers (2013, p. 317)

The ‘Observatory of National Parliaments after Lisbon (OPAL) project has also ranked the formal powers of national parliaments for the time period from 2010 until 2012 (Auel and Tacea, 2015). The ranking is based on expert country reports, parliamentary standing orders and *Conférence des Organes Parlementaires Spécialisés dans les Affaires de l'Union des Parlements de l'Union Européenne* (COSAC) reports (p.13). They include the access to information, scrutiny infrastructure and oversight in their ranking scores (p. 9). The results of the analysis were included in a recent encompassing work on the role of national parliaments in the European Union (Hefftlar, Neuhold, Rozenberg and Smith, 2015).

Thus, the different approaches to classifying parliaments have different strengths and weaknesses. The most important indicators used by the rankings are the scope of parliamentary involvement, the forum in which scrutiny takes place (plenary, sectoral committees, or EAC), the point in time when the parliaments received the documents, and the extent to which mandating rights are binding. These factors will also serve as

the most important indicators of a parliament's formal rights in the present study. The theoretical shortcoming of the abovementioned accounts is that they assume that formal rights can be equated with actual scrutiny activity. Table 1 (p. 28) provides a summary of the different rankings and assesses the relative formal powers of the parliaments. To make the rankings comparable, those rankings that use numerical values were categorised in three categories of 'weak', 'strong' and 'moderate.' As the table shows, there is relatively strong congruence between the different rankings.

It is important to note that none of the studies which seek to explain the emergences and determinants of formal powers of national parliaments in EU affairs has identified the presence of Eurosceptic parties as an important factor, while public Euroscepticism is frequently mentioned. Thus, it is unlikely that the same factors determine the activity of national parliaments in EU affairs as well as their formal powers. Mainstream parties might chose to adopt strong scrutiny powers when the public is Eurosceptic as a form of 'window dressing', but only when issue entrepreneurs are present do parliaments actually become active.

*Table 1: Rankings of the formal scrutiny powers of national parliaments in European Union affairs.*

Country	Bergman I	Bergman II	Maurer&Wessels	Raunio	Karlas	Winzen	OPAL
<b>Austria</b>	3 (Strong)	4 (Strong)	Strong	0.67 (Moderate)	6.5 (Moderate)	1.83 (Moderate)	0.51 (Moderate)
<b>Belgium</b>	1 (Weak)	11 (Weak)	Weak	0.17 (Weak)	2 (Weak)	0.67 (Weak)	0.24 (Weak)
<b>Bulgaria</b>	-	-	-	-	3 (weak)	2.00 (Moderate)	0.41 (Moderate)
<b>Cyprus</b>	-	-	-	-	2 (Weak)	0.33 (Weak)	0.27 (Weak)
<b>Czech Republic</b>	-	-	-	-	4.5 (Moderate)	1.83 (Moderate)	0.58 (Moderate)
<b>Denmark</b>	3 (Strong)	1 (Strong)	Strong	0.83 (Strong)	8 (Strong)	2.67 (Strong)	0.69 (Strong)
<b>Estonia</b>	-	-	-	-	8.5 (Strong)	2.33 (Strong)	0.67 (Strong)
<b>Finland</b>	2 (Moderate)	2 (Strong)	Strong	0.83 (Strong)	8.5 (Strong)	2.50 (Strong)	0.84 (Strong)
<b>France</b>	1 (Weak)	10 (Moderate)	Weak	0.33 (Weak)	5.5 (Moderate)	1.17 (Moderate)	0.55 (Moderate)
<b>Germany</b>	3 (Strong)	5 (Strong)	Moderate	0.50 (Moderate)	7 (Strong)	2.17 (Strong)	0.78 (Strong)
<b>Greece</b>	1 (Weak)	15 (Weak)	Weak	0.17 (Weak)	2 (Weak)	0.83 (Weak)	0.26 (Weak)
<b>Hungary</b>	-	-	-	-	7 (Strong)	2.00 (Moderate)	0.48 (Moderate)
<b>Ireland</b>	1 (Weak)	9 (Moderate)	Weak	0.17 (Weak)	2 (Weak)	1.50 (Moderate)	0.46 (Moderate)
<b>Italy</b>	1 (Weak)	8 (Moderate)	Weak	0.17 (Weak)	5.5 (Moderate)	1.67 (Moderate)	0.46 (Moderate)

Country	Bergman I	Bergman II	Maurer&Wessels	Raunio	Karlas	Winzen	OPAL
Latvia	-	-	-	-	6.5 (Moderate)	2.50 (Strong)	0.53 (Moderate)
Lithuania	-	-	-	-	8.5 (Strong)	2.50 (Strong)	0.73 (Strong)
Luxembourg	1 (Weak)	12 (Weak)	Weak	0.17 (Weak)	3 (Weak)	0.67 (Weak)	0.56 (Moderate)
Malta	-	-	-	-	2.5 (Weak)	1.50 (Moderate)	0.46 (Moderate)
Netherlands	1 (Moderate)	7 (Moderate)	Moderate	0.50 (Moderate)	-	1.83 (Moderate)	0.66 (Strong)
Poland	-	-	-	-	5 (Moderate)	2.00 (Moderate)	0.44 (Moderate)
Portugal	1 (Weak)	13 (Weak)	Weak	0.17 (Weak)	6.5 (Moderate)	1.50 (Moderate)	0.43 (Moderate)
Romania	-	-	-	-	6 (Moderate)	2.33 (Strong)	0.35 (Weak)
Slovakia	-	-	-	-	6.5 (Moderate)	2.50 (Strong)	0.49 (Moderate)
Slovenia	-	-	-	-	7.5 (Strong)	2.00 (Moderate)	0.60 (Strong)
Spain	1 (Weak)	14 (Weak)	Weak	0.17 (Weak)	2 (Weak)	0.83 (Weak)	0.40 (Moderate)
Sweden	2 (Moderate)	3 (Strong)	Strong	0.67 (Strong)	7.5 (Strong)	1.83 (Moderate)	0.72 (Strong)
UK	2 (Moderate)	6 (Moderate)	Weak	0.33 (Weak)	4.5 (Moderate)	1.67 (Moderate)	0.52 (Moderate)

## **Towards an Analysis of Scrutiny Practice**

While the literature on formal scrutiny rights of national parliaments in EU affairs is by now plentiful, an analysis of the actual behaviour of MPs regarding parliamentary scrutiny of EU affairs in general is still relatively scarce. The first studies concerned with scrutiny practice tried to explain on a general, conceptual level why parliaments might not be active scrutinisers. Thus, Auel and Benz argue that parliamentarians face a particular dilemma in EU affairs (2005). They argue that when MPs strongly tie the position of the government by binding mandates, they take away the government's room for manoeuvre in negotiations (Auel and Benz, 2005, p. 373). Binding mandates might weaken the negotiation position of the government and thus be against the national interest (*ibid.*). On the other hand, if MPs give the government too much leeway, they undermine parliamentary control and thus the democratic legitimacy of the EU (*ibid.*). According to Auel and Benz, this is a general dilemma which all parliaments face (*ibid.*). There are differences regarding how parliaments solve this dilemma based on 'the allocation of agenda power and the intensity and shape of party competition' (p. 376). In this sense, the authors claim that formal rights do not lead to strong scrutiny practice and argue that institutional factors play a role in explaining variation (p. 388).

However, this argument differs from the argument presented here in several ways. The present study claims that formal rights are of secondary relevance compared to the presence of issue entrepreneurs and internal dissent within parties combined with public Euroscepticism. Moreover, Auel and Benz explain how institutional factors can hamper the use of scrutiny instruments (negative divergence), but they do not touch

upon the issue that some parliaments are actually more active than their formal powers would suggest (positive divergence). Thus, Auel and Benz compare only broad systems of parliaments, and do not try to insulate different party political factors which might explain differences in scrutiny practice. Their analysis thus obscures much of the variation which arguably exists between member states. In contrast, the present study will analyse systematically why formal rights and actual activity diverge by disentangling the effect of different independent variables in explaining scrutiny activity. Empirically, Auel and Benz test their claim only on a small number of parliaments and on assertions regarding the general functioning of the system, not based on particular legal acts or explicit comparisons across countries and over time. By applying a mixed-method approach, this thesis makes it a point to provide a more extensive test, across systems and over time, of the factors that explain the discrepancy between formal rights and actual activity.

Focusing on particular types of parliamentary activity, a number of studies have emerged which analyse the relationship between the parliament and the public with regards to European affairs. De Wilde analyses how effective parliament is in communicating EU issues (2014). He shows that the extent to which mass media ‘pick up’ parliamentary debates is limited (*ibid.*). De Wilde also finds some variation regarding the institutional setting of the legislature, with more debates taking place in ‘debating parliaments’, such as the House of Commons (*ibid.*). Garcia Lupato, comparing debates in Spain and Italy, has undertaken a similar analysis (2014). The focus on parliamentary debates is a highly relevant aspect of parliamentary scrutiny, and will as such also be covered by the proposed project. However, the authors focus only on one particular policy area (the EU budget), so they can draw no conclusions

regarding the impact of different policy areas. In contrast, this thesis seeks to compare the parliamentary scrutiny for a number of countries and over time.

A comparative approach to plenary activities regarding EU affairs, focusing on debates, has been attempted by Auel and Raunio (2014b). Auel and Raunio compare the coverage of EU issues in the lower chambers of the parliaments of four countries (Germany, Finland, France and the UK). They aim to generate data on the overall involvement of parliaments in debates and compare the parliamentary involvement for three different legal acts (Auel and Raunio, 2014b, p. 14). Auel and Raunio find that the largest share of EU debates in the German *Bundestag*, which is characterised by a general pro-EU consensus, whereas the share of EU debates is particularly low in the British House of Commons, in which both main parties are divided over Europe (p. 21).

Even though their study is a very insightful first step to analyse scrutiny practice in the plenary, it suffers from important methodological shortcomings. First, Auel and Raunio cannot present comparable data on quantitative involvement of the parliaments in EU affairs, but have to rely on different indicators for different parliaments, for example on the number of days for which an EU issue is put on the agenda (p. 17). However, it could well be possible that the EU is mentioned and discussed in the context of a debate on another topic, but the authors only count debates which are explicitly flagged as ‘EU debates’ by the parliaments themselves. An in-depth analysis of parliamentary debates should rely on manual or computer-assisted coding of a larger number of debates. Finally, Auel and Raunio only concentrate on parliamentary debates, without taking other activities in the plenary, such as questions, into account.

Wendler focuses on differences between parties in discussing EU issues. However, he is also more concerned with qualitative aspects of the debate, such as



whether the focus of the debates is on ‘domestic’ or ‘supranational’ aspects of Europe (Wendler, 2011, p. 488) and how processes and events at the European level are justified (Wendler, 2012, p. 4). Wendler finds that cross-national differences in the intensity of debating EU affairs are difficult to identify given the different formats in which EU affairs are debated (Wendler, 2013a, p.11). He argues that ‘it appears questionable how much simple quantitative counts of the amount of time, words or parliamentary procedure can actually tell us about how, and how importantly, the EU is dealt with in domestic parliaments’ (p.11). However, arguably we can expect that underlying political factors will lead to different levels of activity in the forums which happen to be most frequently used in the respective countries. Moreover, given the content analysis employed in Paper 1 (see below), differences between different forums (e.g. parliamentary questions, regular debates, etc.) are not of relevance. In the present thesis, it is not individual debates that are compared with each other, but the monthly shares of keywords. Moreover, in contrast to Wendler’s claims, quantification is arguably the best way to assess the extent of debate, which is the purpose of the present thesis which aims to analyse the difference between formal rights and activity in EU affairs. The keyword-based approach of this thesis is thus a possible way to overcome this limitation of Wendler’s study, since the share of keywords is compared across different modes of debate. It is thus an appropriate approach of measuring activity.

Preliminary analyses of parliamentary questions have been undertaken by Brouard and Navarro (2012) with regard to France and Chaques and Palau (2012) with regard to Spain. Even though these studies are highly interesting, the focus of only one country means that they cannot analyse the effect of institutional variations. The existing studies on the communication function of national parliaments in EU affairs

thus have important shortcomings, which the present study seeks to overcome. The single country study of the German *Bundestag* by Rauh (2015), who employs a dictionary based content analysis approach similar to the one used in Paper 1 of this thesis, is also limited by its narrow focus on only one country.

Focusing on scrutiny practice, Sprungk (2003, 2007, 2011) has shown that formally strong parliaments are not necessarily more active in actual scrutiny activity than weak parliaments. Sprungk has observed a ‘convergence’ of scrutiny practices between the cases of Germany and France, even though the German Parliament has stronger formal scrutiny powers than the French (Sprungk, 2007, p. 155). Her findings are highly interesting and inform the puzzle and research question of this project. However, Sprungk has not solved the puzzle why some parliaments are more active than others. In contrast to this study, Sprungk argues that variation in legislative organisation (i.e. involvement of sectoral committees or not, rights of the opposition) is the most important aspect determining scrutiny activity (Sprungk, 2010, p. 16). Arguably, the importance of this factor is rather limited compared to the influence of party political factors, which themselves influence how actors make use of the opportunities given in the framework of legislative organisation.

An analysis of different activities (with regard to resolutions and time spent discussing in the plenary) has been undertaken by Auel, Rozenberg and Tacea (2015). They also relate the activity of national parliaments to the formal powers they establish in their own ranking. They find that formal powers of national parliaments have an impact on their activity in the form of resolutions and to a lesser extent on the length of parliamentary debates on Europe (p. 294). The present thesis thus partly contradicts the findings of these studies. Nevertheless, they also find an effect of public Euroscepticism

on the number of resolutions and of party Euroscepticism on the length of debates (p. 296). However, it has to be kept in mind that their analysis only covers the time period from 2010 to 2012, which makes the analysis in the present thesis more comprehensive. More recently some studies have focused in-depth of particular sub-policies of EU affairs, such as foreign policy (Edwards, Huff and Smith, 2012), Justice and Home Affairs (Tacea, 2012) or Economic and Monetary Policy (Auel and Hoeing, 2015), substantially deepening our knowledge on how parliamentary scrutiny of EU affairs works in practice in this areas.

Concentrating on the importance of issue salience, Miklin has argued that the differences between formal rights and actual activity can be explained by the level of politicisation of legal acts (2012). In the case of more highly politicised legal acts, such as the Services Directive, parliaments would always make full use of their formal scrutiny powers (*ibid.*). The problem with this argument is that Miklin cannot explain why there is still variation between countries with regard to the extent to which formal powers and practices diverge even for legal acts which are equally politicised in the respective countries.

The only other works which have explicitly addressed the gap between formal powers and practice are Hegeland and Neuhold with regard to Austria, Finland and Sweden (2002, p. 13), Pollack and Smolinski with regard to Austria (2003, 2012), Knutelská (2011a, 2011b, p. 21), and Bartiovic and Král (2011) with regard to the Czech Republic and Slovakia. However, none of these studies explicitly tries to explain why formal rules and practice diverge, but just acknowledge that there is such a difference.

A final strand of the literature on scrutiny practice looks at the attitudes of MPs on their role in parliamentary scrutiny. Thus, Wessels (2005) found in a large-scale, quantitative survey that MPs in some countries (for example Germany) have more trust in the European Parliament and see scrutiny in European affairs basically as the task of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) (Wessels, 2005, p. 455). Others, for example French MPs, see the role of the national parliament as more important (*ibid.*). These different views have an important impact on how MPs envisage the future institutional architecture of the European Union (p. 463). Arguably, the attitude of MPs might also have an impact on how scrutiny practices are carried out, and on whether formal rights and actual activity diverge.

### **The Crucial Role of Issue Entrepreneurs**

As explained in the sections above, the current literature on the role of national parliaments in the European Union mostly focuses on the role of formal powers and claims that these powers are the most important determinants of actual activity. When the impact of public Euroscepticism or Eurosceptic parties is acknowledged, the exact impact of these factors is not clearly explained; the same is true for internal dissent of parties on EU affairs. By contrast, this thesis argues that the presence of issue entrepreneurs (parties which differ significantly from all other parties in a political system on the topic of Europe), the extent to which (mainstream) parties are divided on Europe and public Euroscepticism are the most important factors in explaining parliamentary activity in EU affairs. Formal rights do not seem to have a strong impact on actual activity, which explains why formal powers and actual activity diverge.

This thesis focuses explicitly on the agency of parties, and in particular on issue entrepreneurs and on how mainstream parties react to them, in bringing about parliamentary activity in EU affairs. This aspect was previously neglected by existing studies which concentrate mostly on structural factors relating to the formal powers of national parliaments. In this context, the thesis analyses both the incentives for and the constraints on parties when emphasizing EU issues in debates in the plenary and in committees as well as in the form of resolutions..

The concept of ‘issue entrepreneurship’ in the EU context was first defined by Hobolt and De Vries (2015, p. 3). It is defined as ‘a political strategy with which parties mobilise new policy issues that have been largely ignored by the political mainstream and adopt a position on the issue that is substantially different from the current position of the mainstream’ (ibid.). Issue entrepreneur parties thus have a larger ‘framing distance’ on the issue in question, in this case the EU, than the mainstream parties have amongst each other (Van der Wardt, 2015, p. 841). Whether a party can be classified as an issue entrepreneur thus depends on its position vis-à-vis other parties in the political system. The concept of issue entrepreneurs in the study of Hobolt and De Vries builds on earlier work by Carmines and Stimson (1986, 1989, 1993) and Riker (1982, 1986, 1996). Carmines and Stimson found that parties which lose out in the political system usually are the ones which introduce new issues (1993). The concept does not as such relate to EU affairs and has been developed in the US literature to conceptualise the political mobilisation on previously dormant issues such as race (Carmines and Stimson, 1986). In contemporary Europe, parties could become issue entrepreneurs on a number of issues on which mainstream parties do not wish to mobilise or which cut across the left-right axis, such as immigration (Hobolt and De Vries, 2015, p. 20). In the

context of the present thesis, however, the term will be used exclusively with reference to EU affairs. Issue entrepreneurs are thus defined in contrast to mainstream parties, which do not mobilise on the issue of EU affairs and for which Europe is a cross-cutting topic.

The concept of issue entrepreneurs thus differs from related concepts such as ‘niche parties’ or ‘challenger parties’. Wagner defines niche parties as ‘parties that de-emphasize economic concerns and stress a small range of non-economic issues’ (2011, p. 2). A similar definition is used by Meguid, who adds that issues addressed by niche parties cut across existing party lines (2008). While these definitions fit many issue entrepreneurs, neglecting the socio-economic dimension is not a necessary requirement for a party to be classified as an issue entrepreneur. The focus on a rather narrow set of issues – Wagner mentions European integration explicitly (2011, p. 3) – is certainly also the characteristic of many issue entrepreneurs. What is crucial for a party to be an issue entrepreneur is that it differs significantly in its stance on the issue of European integration from other parties represented in parliament, both in terms of the direction (Euroscepticism) and strength (salience) of its preferences. The importance it attaches to the socio-economic dimension or the number of other policy areas it focuses on is not relevant in this context. Likewise, the concept of ‘challenger parties’ is not always congruent with issue entrepreneurs. While many issue entrepreneurs have never been in government, others occasionally have been part of the government under particular circumstances and usually prompting government instability, such as in Austria from 2000 to 2007. Similarly, the size of a party is also not relevant: While many issue entrepreneurs are small, others such as the Freedom Party (FPÖ) in Austria regularly gain a large share of seats and votes. Some authors focus on particular party types or

families, such as 'New Politics Parties' encompassing Green parties, extreme left/Marxist parties, the radical right and others (Hino, 2012, p. 14). Again, while issue entrepreneurs are clearly concentrated in some of these party families, such as the extreme left and right, others, such as Green parties, do not usually act as issue entrepreneurs according to the definition used in this thesis.

There are a number of factors which provide incentives and disincentives for parties to become active in EU affairs (Auel, 2009; Auel and Benz, 2005). While carrying out scrutiny, MPs will avoid taking actions that will hamper their chances for re-election (Auel, 2009, p. 16). Firstly, parties have an incentive to present a coherent position to the voters (Proksch and Slapin, 2012, p. 522). Thus, if parties are divided they do not favour public scrutiny on the issue in question (Auel, 2007, p. 492). This is the case for government as well as opposition parties (Van der Wardt, De Vries and Hobolt, 2014, p. 989-990). The way a party is perceived with regard to its stance on Europe is important since a party's position on EU affairs is likely to influence voting decisions, as De Vries and Tillman have shown (2011, p. 10). Parties which foster an issue on the agenda can be expected to be coherent on the issue in question (Hobolt and De Vries, 2015, p. 19). By contrast, mainstream parties are often divided on the topic of Europe (Gabel and Scheve, 2007, p. 38). Dissent on Europe has increased over the last two decades (Hooghe and Marks, 2006, p. 249). Being perceived as divided on an issue is generally considered to hurt the electoral prospects of a party (Kam, 2009, p. 134). Parties can thus be considered to be less active under these circumstances (Auel, 2007, p. 492). Hence, issue entrepreneurs will adopt a strategy by which they hope to expose the divisiveness of their competitors – they use Europe as a 'wedge issue' (Van de Wardt, De Vries and Hobolt, 2014, p. 997).

Secondly, the distance between parties and the voters on the issues of EU affairs provides important incentives and constraints. The parties EU affairs strategies are thus influenced and modulated by public opinion on European integration. In most European countries, political elites are more pro-European than citizens (Hooghe, 2003, p. 296). Eurosceptic Parties have an incentive to be active in the form of debating EU affairs in the plenary and initiating resolutions on the topic when public Euroscepticism is high, since they want to show voters that they are more in line with them on the issue of Europe than other parties. By contrast, mainstream parties that are more pro-European than their voters might want to hide this fact from the electorate and become less active when public Euroscepticism is higher since they could potentially face high costs for diverging from their voters (Auel and Raunio, 2014b, p. 16).

Parties are thus becoming active in EU affairs when the incentives of being perceived as active outweigh the cost of appearing divided. At a certain level of divisiveness on Europe, higher levels of public Euroscepticism might lead to diminished activity, given that it is more likely that voters for which Europe is salient are likely to perceive divisiveness on EU affairs very negatively. Strong public Euroscepticism thus amplifies the benefits of being active in EU affairs, but also increases the costs of the party being regarded as divided by the voters, especially for mainstream parties. This dimension of the incentives and disincentives of parties to become actively involved in EU affairs has been previously largely neglected by studies of parliamentary involvement in EU affairs. The relationship between the salience of EU affairs, internal divisiveness on Europe and public Euroscepticism for both government and mainstream parties is depicted in Table 2 below.



**Table 2:** *Incentives for issue entrepreneurs and mainstream parties to become active in EU affairs*

	<b>Issue Entrepreneurs</b>	<b>Mainstream Parties</b>
<b>Salience of EU affairs</b>	High	Usually Low
<b>Internal divisiveness on EU affairs</b>	Low	High
<b>Distance to voters on EU affairs</b>	Low	High
<b>Incentive to become active in EU affairs when public Euroscepticism increases</b>	Increases	Decreases

Most issue entrepreneurs can be found on the extreme right and the extreme left of the political system. It is very rare for mainstream parties to mobilise on a new issue since these issues often cut across the left/right dimension, the main line of conflict for mainstream parties (Meguid, 2008, p. 4). While extreme left parties tend to criticize the EU on economic grounds, parties on the extreme right often focus on a loss of national sovereignty (De Vries and Edwards, 2009, p. 22). Moreover, parties which are not represented in parliament but have a strong impact on the public perception of an issue can be considered issue entrepreneurs, such as in the case of United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP).

By fostering an issue in the parliamentary realm, parties try to establish ownership of an issue (Dahlberg and Martinsson, 2015, p. 826). This might help them to increase their visibility in the media by being associated with the issue (Van der Brug and Berghoeut, 2015, p. 882). This in turn might also influence their electoral prospects since they gain more attention in campaigns (Lefevre, Tresch and Walgrave, 2015b, p. 901). Hence, issue entrepreneur parties can be expected to be especially active in EU affairs in the form of resolutions and debates.

The success of issue entrepreneurs in establishing the ownership of an issue is however heavily dependent on the behaviour of mainstream parties themselves, which is a very important factor in itself (Meguid, 2008, p. 30). The behaviour of the spatially non-neighbouring party, for example the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) in the German case of *Die Linke*, determines the success of the issue entrepreneurs (p. 32). According to Meguid, the chances for success of an issue entrepreneur are best (in a spatial model with three parties) when one mainstream party dismisses the actions of the issue entrepreneur while the other is adversarial (p. 33).

However, mainstream parties are restricted in their choice of how to react to an issue entrepreneur. They cannot accommodate positions which are diametrically opposed to their own (Meguid, 2008, p. 35). For example, it would be very difficult for the pro-integrationist CDU in Germany to accommodate a Eurosceptic party. Moreover, parties cannot take a policy position that is fundamentally at odds with its previous position on the topic (ibid.). In addition, the reaction of the mainstream party has to be timely to be effective (p. 37). Mainstream parties thus face a number of constraints not only with regard to the extent to which they can engage with the issue of EU affairs, but also with regard to the opportunities they have to react to issue entrepreneurs which are highly active on the topic.

According to saliency-based theory, parties which are closely associated with a topical issue benefit from it being discussed (Budge, 2015, p. 767). Therefore, we can expect that mainstream parties might also want to engage more with an issue which was introduced by issue entrepreneurs by engaging in a process of 'issue convergence' (Walgrave, Tresch and Lefevre, 2015, p. 779). This will make it difficult for the issue entrepreneurs to establish ownership of the issue and to benefit from it electorally

(Dahlberg and Martinsson, 2015, p. 829). The presence of issue entrepreneurs can thus lead to more overall activity on the topic of Europe.

All these factors influence parliamentary activity independently from formal powers of national parliaments in EU affairs. Hence an increase in formal powers will not lead to more activity if the underlying political factors do not change. In the same way, parliaments with weak formal powers and political factors conducive to strong scrutiny will be more active irrespective of the formal powers. This can explain the divergence between formal powers and actual activity in EU affairs. In the following section, the different functions of national parliaments in EU affairs and the different venues for activity are examined.

### **Challenges to the Definitions of Issue Entrepreneurship and Euroscepticism**

When applying the issue entrepreneur framework, important conceptual choices had to be made. A first important choice is which parties to include in the definition of issue entrepreneurs. Theoretically, the key criterion for deeming a party an issue entrepreneur is its relative distance from the other parties in the party system on the issue of Europe and the salience they attribute to the issue (Hobolt and De Vries, 2015, p. 1163). Conceptually, issue entrepreneurship has thus two important components: a) the distance to the mean party position in parliament on the question of Europe and b) the salience of EU affairs for the party (p. 1168). The exact absolute stance of issue entrepreneurs on European integration can thus vary substantially depending on the respective political system. Hence, clearly Eurosceptic parties such as the *Front*

*National* in France are classified as issue entrepreneurs, while *Die Linke* in Germany could only be regarded as Eurosceptic relative to the other German parties and its positions might not be regarded as Eurosceptic in other party systems and countries.

The conceptualisation of issue entrepreneurs is thus closely related to the definition of Euroscepticism. For this thesis, Euroscepticism plays an important role both at the party level and at the individual level ('popular Euroscepticism'). At the party level, a distinction can be made between 'hard' and 'soft' Eurosceptic parties (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2002, p. 7). While 'hard' Euroscepticism at the party level is characterized by fundamental opposition of membership to the European Union, 'soft' Eurosceptic parties might confine criticism to particular aspects or policies of the EU or opposes further integration (ibid). However, what is critical for the definition of issue entrepreneurs as illustrated by the case of *Die Linke*, is that the distance of these parties to all other parties on their position on Europe is larger than the distance of all other parties from each other. Issue entrepreneurs thus have a larger 'framing' distance on the issue of Europe (Van der Wardt, 2015, p. 841). Moreover, their electorate is relatively more Eurosceptic than that of the other parties<sup>1</sup>. Thus, *Die Linke*, as a 'soft' Eurosceptic party, even though not necessarily very anti-European in a cross country comparison, fulfills the function of an issue entrepreneur in the German political system by articulating public Euroscepticism in the plenary and in Committees and by challenging the position of mainstream parties.

At the popular level, Euroscepticism can be defined as an 'encompassing a range of critical positions on European integration, as well as outright opposition' (Hooghe

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<sup>1</sup> The Eurosceptic *Alternative fuer Deutschland* (AfD) was not represented in the German Bundestag in the time period studies here.

and Marks, 2007, p. 43). Thus, individuals who would describe themselves as ‘Eurosceptic’ fall on ‘one side of a continuum that ranges from very positive to very negative dispositions towards European integration, its policies, its institutions, or its principles’ (ibid.). For the purpose of this thesis, popular Euroscepticism is thus conceptualised as the preferences of the electorate with regard to European integration in the sense that the membership of the country to the European Union is overall evaluated in a negative light. This definition is rather broad and it is acknowledged that popular Euroscepticism can encompass a variety of different critical positions on Europe. Therefore, this definition also mirrors the conceptualisation at the party level, allowing for ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ Euroscepticism, as explained above. More specifically, popular Euroscepticism is conceptualized as the share of the respondents in the Eurobarometer survey who think membership of the European Union is a ‘bad thing’ for their country minus those who think that it is a ‘good thing’ (Eurobarometer, 2012a). The measure is thus negative if the public is pro-European and positive if it is Eurosceptic.

Crucially, it is assumed that the preference of the voters on European integration are relevant for the strategic choices of political parties. This assumption is well supported by research (Spoon, 2012; Williams and Spoon, 2015). Parties seem to be responsive to the electorate’s preferences in EU affairs (Steenbergen, Edwards and De Vries, 2007; Arnold, Sapir and De Vries, 2012). For example, parties respond to public Euroscepticism by increasing the number of Eurosceptic statement in their manifestos (Williams and Spoon, 2015, p. 185). The interaction of both public and party Euroscepticism is thus at the core of the argument of this thesis.

Euroscepticism is however not the only relevant element which makes a party an issue entrepreneur, as mentioned above. Parties which are categorized as issue entrepreneurs might also attribute different degrees of salience to the issue of Europe. Arguably, opposition to EU membership only plays a minor role in the overall programme of some Eurosceptic parties, such as the Democratic Unionist Party in Northern Ireland (DUP) (even though the party supported the campaign to leave the European Union in the runup to the 2016 referendum on membership in the UK). However, when the issue of Europe becomes salient, such as in an referendum campaign, all Eurosceptic parties will clearly emphasize the issue and exploit their distance to their mainstream parties – even though their overall focus or ‘core’ issue is a different one, in the case of the DUP sectarian politics. Empirically, these differences are taken into account in the construction of issue entrepreneurship as a continuous variable combining both the distance to the mean party position of all parties in parliament on the EU and the salience of EU affairs for the respective party. Since the two components are multiplied, a party like the FN would have a higher issue entrepreneurship score than the DUP, which is Eurosceptic but for which Europe is not necessarily salient. The DUP in turn has a higher score than *Die Linke*, which has a moderately large framing distance to all other parties but low salience (see the methods sections in Papers 1 and 2).

A disadvantage of this operationalization is that parties which are not represented in parliament, not least the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), remain outside the framework of analysis. This is certainly debatable yet it seems a necessary choice to only include actors which are represented in parliament since the thesis is concerned with the parliamentary activity in EU affairs as a consequence of the

presence of issue entrepreneurs and public Euroscepticism. Therefore, only the activity of parties represented in parliament are available. However, clearly ‘extra parliamentary issue entrepreneurs’ such as UKIP, had an impact on the behaviour of mainstream parties represented in parliament. In future work such parties could be included in the analysis. Paper 3, which qualitatively analyses parliamentary activity in EU affairs in the case of the Fiscal Compact Treaty, explicitly takes the activity of extra-parliamentary issue entrepreneurs such as UKIP and the mechanisms through which they influence the behaviour of mainstream parties into account.

For the present thesis, issue entrepreneurs are only defined as electorally independent parties. The definition thus excludes party factions, such as the Eurosceptic faction in the UK Conservative Party, or the Christian Social Union (CSU), the arguably Eurosceptic sister party of the German Christian Democratic Union (CDU). In the case of the Conservative Party, the Eurosceptic faction mobilizes on the issue of Europe against the wishes of the (mainstream) party leadership. Indeed, when a party is deeply divided and a substantive faction of the party holds views which differ substantially not only from the other mainstream parties but also from the mainstream of its own party, this faction can fulfill functions similar to that of an ‘issue entrepreneur, and might have a similar impact on parliamentary activity in EU affairs. This would only be the case if the faction represents a sufficiently large share of the party and the framing distance (Van de Wardt, 2015, p. 841) between the faction and the mainstream of the party is larger than the framing distance between the mainstream of the party and other parties in parliament. However, the key difference is that party factions do not represent a viable electoral alternative for voters, unless and Eurosceptic faction splits from the party. Moreover, even the most Eurosceptic party rebels will at times have to take tactical

considerations of the leadership into account and thus do not act as completely independent actors. Furthermore, the situation of the UK Conservative Party in the 2010s might be rather exceptional in the Europe-wide comparison. Other parties are arguably not that publicly divided. It would thus be a stretch of the concept of issue entrepreneurship to include parliamentary factions of mainstream parties. Empirically, a problem for the operationalisation of the concept of issue entrepreneurship in Papers 1 and 2 would be that no quantitative data on party positions exist, so that the distance of the Eurosceptic faction of the party would be impossible to operationalise. To some extent, factionalisation is captured by the variable on internal party dissent on Europe. Moreover, the qualitative analysis in Paper 3 focuses in depth on the activities of party factions in EU affairs and the impact their behaviour has on the activity of the respective party leadership and parliament as a whole. While the definitions of ‘issue entrepreneurs’ and, related to it, Euroscepticism, which are employed in this thesis are certainly contestable, they have been made after careful consideration of the theoretical and empirical implications of these conceptual choices.

### **Different Forms of Activity and Parliamentary Functions**

Parliamentary activity is defined in a twofold way in this thesis. The first form of activity is the extent to which Members of Parliament (MPs) debate EU affairs in the plenary (Paper 1). This form of activity can be related to the deliberation and communication function of parliament – directed at the citizens. The second form of activity is defined as the frequency with which parliamentary committees issue resolutions on European affairs and the extent to which these resolutions are ‘critical’



(Paper 2). This form of activity is an expression of the actual scrutiny function of parliament of controlling and holding the government to account. The exact mechanism by which parliament and parties use these avenues of activity is examined in a case study on the Fiscal Compact (in Paper 3).

These activities correspond to the two broad categories of functions of parliaments: the citizen-related function of communication and the function of controlling the government (Norton, 1993). Based on the work of Packenham (1973), Norton divided the functions of parliament as broadly citizen- and government-related (1993). Raunio adopted those functions to the specific role of national parliaments in EU affairs (2011, p. 307). The citizen-related functions include ‘acting as a safety valve and achieving redress for grievance’ (in the case of EU affairs, providing a forum for conflict over European integration), ‘mobilising and educating citizens’ (educating and informing on European integration) and ‘interest articulation’ (expressing the preferences of interest groups and voters in EU affairs) (ibid.). All of these functions can be undertaken in the form of plenary debates or parliamentary questions and are captured by the first measure of activity in this thesis.

The government-related functions include ‘government oversight’ (the actual scrutiny of EU legal acts), ‘law making’ (which takes place only indirectly in EU affairs via control of the government), ‘latent legitimating’ (providing legitimacy for the European Union by regular parliamentary involvement) and ‘manifest legitimating’ (by formally approving EU legal acts) (p. 307). Of these functions, only ‘government oversight’ is explicitly measured as activity in this thesis, since it is arguably the most important government-related function of national parliaments in EU affairs from which the other functions are derived. Moreover, ‘government oversight’ is the only function,

which can relatively straightforwardly be measured and compared in the form of resolutions. However, the mere number of resolutions does not tell us anything about the extent to which these documents actually critically engage with government positions. Therefore, the extent to which the resolutions are critical or supportive of the government is also analysed in Paper 2.

In the academic literature, both citizen- and government-related types of activity are frequently referred to as ‘scrutiny.’ However, as Raunio points out, it might be misleading to classify parliamentary debates simply as ‘scrutiny.’ In contrast to traditional control functions such as scrutiny in EACs and other committees, the interaction with the government (or the opposition) is secondary to the interaction with the voters and citizens, who are arguably the actual addressees of the debates (Raunio, 2011, p. 306). As this thesis shows, this is particularly true for issue entrepreneurs, who mention Europe more frequently in debates than mainstream parties (Paper 1) and specifically use debates to appeal to their Eurosceptic voters, as Paper 3 on the Fiscal Compact Treaty demonstrates. Moreover, deliberations in committees are often not available to the public in full, further underlining that this form of activity is directed at the government and not primarily the citizens (ibid.). It is thus more useful to refer solely to the government-related functions analysed in Paper 2 as ‘scrutiny,’ while the citizen-related function measured in Paper 1 can be referred to as communication and deliberation.

Nevertheless, both are important forms of parliamentary activity in EU affairs (Auel, 2007; Raunio, 2011). The communication function is important because parliaments as ‘strong publics’ and forums for deliberation can contribute to the emergence of ‘public spheres’ in Europe, which can be seen as a ‘necessary, but not

sufficient condition for democracy’ (Eriksen and Fossum, 2002, p. 402). Arguably, national parliaments are still better suited to fulfil this role than the European Parliament (Wendler, 2014, p. 4). Parliamentary debate on Europe could then lead to an increased interest and level of information on EU issues amongst citizens (Auel and Runio, 2014, p. 2). This, in turn, could then lead to ‘a more democratic Union’ from a deliberative point of view (De Wilde, 2009 in Auel and Runio, 2014, p. 2). The actual scrutiny function is also of tremendous importance since (relating to the classical argument on the democratic deficit of the European Union) they might help to partly compensate for their loss of power resulting from European integration (Hix and Raunio, 2000, p. 142). Particularly, parliamentary scrutiny of EU affairs might help the governing majority to get involved in policy making in EU-affairs (Winzen, 2012, p. 299). This involvement strengthens and extends the parliamentary delegation chain to the European level (p. 298). Both forms of activity are thus very important for deliberative and representational aspects of democracy in the European Union respectively.

A further parliamentary function relates to the so-called ‘networking function’ of cooperation with other parliaments (Raunio, 2011, p. 307). The recent increase in the interest in these aspects of parliamentary scrutiny can be explained by entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, which not only gives the Conference of European Affairs Committees (COSAC) legal status for the first time, but also introduced the Early Warning Mechanism for Subsidiarity Control (Abels and Eppler, 2011, p. 17). The latter allows national parliaments to submit a ‘reasoned opinion’ when they believe that the principle of subsidiarity is likely to be violated by an EU legal act. When a third of national parliaments submit a reasoned opinion until eight weeks after the publication of

the draft in all official languages of the EU, the Commission has to review the respective legal act (Neuhold, 2011, p. 6).

Even though the Early Warning System of Subsidiarity Control (EWS) was only established very recently, there is already a wealth of literature on its constitutional nature and possible implications. Much of this literature takes a constructivist perspective. Cooper argues that the EWS will lead to stronger cooperation between national parliaments and will transform them eventually in a ‘Virtual Third Chamber’ of the European Union (Cooper, 2006, p. 283). Rather optimistically, Cooper predicts that ‘the EWS will alleviate the “democratic deficit” in so far as it will lead to increased parliamentary, and thereby public, scrutiny of the EU’s legislative process’ (p. 282). Taking a similar constructivist view and focusing on the collective influence of parliaments, Crum and Fossum argue that the EU by now represents a ‘multilevel parliamentary field’ (Crum and Fossum, 2009, p. 249). They claim that two representative channels exist in the EU, one via the EP and the other via national parliaments (p. 252).

In contrast, preliminary empirical evidence regarding the impact of inter-parliamentary cooperation, especially in the context of the EWS, paints a rather bleak picture. Both Neuhold (2011) as well as Buzogany and Stuchlik (2011) find that even though some parliaments seem to participate actively, the overall effect is rather weak. An important reason for this is that the threshold of two thirds of all national parliaments is very high, and has never been reached until now (Buzogany and Stuchlik, 2011 p. 28). Moreover, national parliaments tend to get involved too late in the legislative process (p. 20). Kiiver argues that the EWS should not be seen as device for national parliaments to exercise direct power, but as a means to make the governments

and EU institutions explain and justify what they are doing (2012, p. 17). Knutelska sees some progress regarding the cooperation of national parliaments via their collective database, the Inter-Parliamentary EU Information Exchange (IPEX) (Knutelska, 2011a, p. 342). Thus, there seems to be an imbalance between the attention paid to the EWS in the theoretical literature and its usefulness in practice. From the perspective of the argument of this thesis, this comes as no surprise. If an increase in formal rights has no effect on scrutiny practice at the domestic level, we cannot expect it to have a strong effect on inter-parliamentary coordination. To facilitate cooperation between parliaments, the institutional incentive structure would have to be changed in order for MPs to get actively involved. For this reason, the EWS and related activity are not the main focus of this thesis. Arguably, scrutinising their own government and communication to domestic publics remain the most important tasks of national parliaments in EU affairs.

Any discussion of parliamentary activity must acknowledge the mechanisms of effective scrutiny to justify why we should study effectiveness as a precondition to activity in the first place. Here it is necessary to differentiate between the effectiveness of parliament as a whole and effectiveness of the actions of particular parties. The two forms of effectiveness are likely to be in opposition to each other. This is the case when issue entrepreneurs increase parliamentary activity through politicization, so that the actual impact of parliament on substantive questions might diminish. There is thus no connection between formal powers and activity, but equally no definitive link between activity and effectiveness, which is in turn also not influenced by formal powers. The extent of parliamentary involvement in EU affairs is thus dependent on the extent to which issue entrepreneurs are present and the degree to which they manage to politicize

EU affairs. Government parties, mainstream opposition parties and issue entrepreneurs have different aims of effective scrutiny.

One aspect of observable effectiveness would be that parliament formulates a resolution which differs from the initial position of the government (Auel, 2007, p. 491). Effective scrutiny would thus mean the ‘ability of parliament to induce the government to change its negotiation position in a way it would not have done without parliamentary interference, namely through the drafting of more or less binding resolutions’ (ibid.). However especially in ex-post scrutiny the ability to do so is admittedly limited (Sprugk, 2010, p.8). A critical resolution would thus be the precondition for observable effective scrutiny under this definition, since it expresses dissent which the government could or could not take into account. Therefore, the extent to which a resolution is critical or supportive of the government is analysed in Paper 2. However, there are several situations in which scrutiny effectiveness might be unobservable. The government might anticipate preferences of the parliamentary majority, so that the parliamentary preferences are taken into account without any activity taking place (Papadopoulos, 2007, p. 469 in Auel, 2007, p. 502). Parliamentary influence might thus take place in private or via informal channels (Auel, 2007, p. 503). At the party level, parliamentary activity can be effective in securing ‘side payments’ in other related areas. Side payments for the opposition are common in negotiating international agreements and can, in some cases, improve the overall bargaining outcome (Rector, 2011). They can also be used to secure agreement from smaller coalition partners (Lindvall, 2010).

Whether a parliament was effective with regard to its government control function can thus be established in two ways. The first criterion, established in Paper 2,

is whether the parliamentary resolutions are critical of the government. The more critical they are, the more likely it is that they will have an actual impact on government policy, since MPs already took the risky step of criticizing their own government in public (Auel, 2007, p. 492). Since resolutions are the parliamentary tool which is most directly related to government control, they were chosen as the most appropriate operationalization of this aspect of effectiveness. The second factor can only be established in the case study in Paper 3 and relates to the extent to which the government actually changes its position after parliamentary intervention or provides side payments to particular parties. To some extent, the anticipation of parliamentary preferences by the government could be uncovered in the case study. The anticipation of parliamentary preferences by the government thus pre-structures the treatment of legal acts by national parliaments.

The second feature of effectiveness is that the parliament communicates EU issues to the citizens and educates and informs them about European issues via parliamentary questions and debates, as analysed in Paper 1 (Auel, 2007, p. 498; Sprungk, 2011, p. 16). In this sense, parliament already fulfils its function as an agent of keeping the electorate or the public at large informed when it displays strong activity in this regard. At the level of Parliament as a whole, strong media attention to debates would thus be a sign of effective scrutiny. At the level of individual parties, effective involvement in this sense can also mean that certain parties manage to distinguish themselves and appeal successfully to their particular group of constituents. In Paper 3 it becomes clear the issue entrepreneurs are especially good at appealing to their particular constituents on European issues. Their arguments are reported by the media to a disproportionate extent. This confirms the findings of De Wilde that Eurosceptic

parties generally benefit more from media coverage (De Wilde, 2009, p. 14). A parliament which frequently and extensively discusses EU matters has thus the necessary precondition to be effective in this regard. Effectiveness could be proven by analysing the extent to which this activity is taken up by the media (for the case of parliament as a whole as well as for individual party groups) (De Wilde, 2014). However, it would be difficult to trace whether this actually reaches the citizens, and the extent to which their knowledge of an EU issue is due to parliamentary activity. Thus, as far as the effectiveness of the communication function is concerned, parliamentary activity, plus media coverage as established in the case study are the only feasible benchmarks.

As mentioned above, activity and effectiveness can at times run in opposite directions. As becomes clear in all papers, issue entrepreneurs are especially active in debating EU affairs and issuing resolutions on the topic. They also entice mainstream parties to become more active with regard to EU affairs. However, as Paper 2 shows, issue entrepreneurs issue a large number of resolutions, but these resolutions are mostly concerned with general political points about the EU and not with the particular legal act at hand. This is empirically measured by the small ratio of the long preambles of the resolutions which contain many political points and the short operational parts which contain little technical detail. The strong activity of issue entrepreneurs might thus not lead to more overall parliamentary effectiveness. It might even be detrimental to effectiveness by binding up resources for politicised discussion which turns out to be only ‘smoke and mirrors’. The strategies of issue entrepreneurs to focus their strong activity on political issues often unrelated to the actual matter at hand can be confirmed in the qualitative case study of the Fiscal Compact in Paper 3 and also mirrors the



findings of Streklov who argues that national parliaments often prefer to concentrate on subsidiarity than on EU Policy (2015, p. 368). Issue entrepreneurs were very active in discussing the Fiscal Compact and issued many resolutions on the topic. However, qualitatively they were relating the Treaty to general questions on European integration and did not engage constructively with it. This also challenged mainstream parties to become more active, but might have prevented a more effective treatment of the matter in some parliaments.

It thus follows that the activity driven by issue entrepreneurs makes national parliaments much better in fulfilling their communication function than their government control function in EU affairs. Issue entrepreneurs force the topic of Europe on the agenda and incite mainstream parties to react to the issue of Europe. This makes parliaments as a whole responsible for the changes in public opinion on EU affairs. With regard to the government control function, the presence of issue entrepreneurs also leads to more activity, but the scrutiny of these parties is does usually not engage in-depth with the legal act at hand. Simultaneously, the scrutiny activity of government parties just blindly supports the government. Overall, the effectiveness of the government control function of national parliaments in EU affairs is thus diminished. Indeed, parliaments might be effective in communicating EU issues to the public when issue entrepreneurs are present. However, issue entrepreneurs themselves focus on rather narrow sections of the public in their communication strategy, as becomes clear in Paper 3. The positive impact they can have on the communication function of parliament as a whole is thus rather indirect in that they force mainstream parties to react to them and thus stimulate debate overall.

## **Methodological Approaches and Plan of the Thesis**

The methodological approach pursued here combines qualitative and quantitative methods and can thus be characterised as a mixed-methods approach. Mixed-method research designs are not appropriate for all research questions, since qualitative and quantitative methods can sometimes lead to divergent results and thus make the study ambiguous (Hancké, 2009, p. 41). In the present case, the research question lends itself to be answered with both qualitative and quantitative methods - indeed; it can be answered more thoroughly when using methodological triangulation: the quantitative studies in Paper 1 (Debates) and Paper 2 (Resolutions) provide a big picture of how scrutiny activity differs, and which variables account for these differences. By contrasting the role played by formal rights with the significance of party political variables, the analysis will show why divergence between formal rights and actual activity exists. The qualitative analysis investigates the mechanisms through which these variables affect scrutiny activity of one particular act, the Fiscal Compact for a subset of member states (Paper 3). This approach follows the 'nested analysis' approach suggest by Liebermann (2005). For the present study, combining quantitative and qualitative studies is thus essential for answering the research questions in a comprehensive manner.

The first paper, which analyses the scrutiny activity of national parliaments in the form of debates, employs a dictionary-based computer-assisted content analysis approach. For this purpose, more than 3084 transcripts of debates were downloaded from the parliaments' websites. For reasons of feasibility, only two months per year were analysed, March and October. These two months were chosen because a high number of plenary days took place during these months in all countries covered here.

This, of course restricts, the analysis and a number of important events will arguably take place outside of these two months. However, given the long time period analysed (1992-2012), these effects are likely to cancel out over time and among countries. The beginning of the analysis in 1992 was chosen since the Maastricht Treaty was arguably an important starting point for politicisation in the European Union. All parliamentary proceedings in these months, including oral questions, were then analysed using a content analysis approach. In the second part of the analysis of Paper 1, the speech segments for the time period from 2010-2012 were divided manually for each party, so that the dictionary could be applied separately for each party. The results of the analysis at the party level confirmed the results of the parliamentary level – issue entrepreneurs emerge as the most important factors for parliamentary activity in EU affairs.

A classical content analysis is defined here as ‘the tradition of examining word frequencies, creating concordances and building content dictionaries in order to operationalise substantively interesting aspects of document meaning’ (Lowe, 2006, p.1). Neuendorf has defined content analysis as ‘the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics’ (2002, p. 1). Four concepts are particularly important when carrying out a content analysis: Reliability (the extent which the results are reproducible), validity (the extent to which the concept one wants to analyse is actually measured), accuracy as well as precision (the degree of distinction between different measurement categories) (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 113). When carrying out computer-assisted content analysis, reliability is always perfect, in contrast to hand coding (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 258). In contrast, validity can potentially be problematic for computer-assisted content analysis (p.266).

Two dictionaries were then constructed to measure the extent to which Europe is mentioned in the plenary. First, an “EU dictionary” which includes EU related keywords (see Appendix 1 for the list of keywords). The keywords were derived from manually reading a number of German and British parliamentary debates on EU related topics from each year. The list of keywords was then translated into French and Spanish to compile the other dictionaries by experts familiar with the countries. The experts were asked to translate the keywords in a way appropriate for the particular political context and not literally. Secondly, a general keywords dictionary was constructed based on the categories of the comparative agendas project (see for example Baumgartner, Green-Pedersen and Wilkerson, 2006; Brouard, Costa and König, 2012). The validity of the dictionaries was then checked using a keywords-in-context approach. Moreover, two expert coders were asked to re-code the keywords as to make sure that the EU keywords could be categorised as such. The corresponding Krippendorff’s Alpha scores were calculated. The share of EU keywords of all words was then analysed for each month using the programme WordStat, an add-on to the content analysis programme QDA Miner.<sup>2</sup>

The relatively dictionary-based approach was chosen over more complex text-analysis methods since the main aim of Paper 1 on debates is to analyse the salience of EU related issues in parliamentary debates in the plenary over time. Similar approaches have been used for a long time in the literature to extract the salience of an issue from political texts and are generally regarded as reliable (see Budge, 2015, for an overview). They have also more recently been applied by other authors to similar research questions (Rauh, 2015). More complex methods such as WordScore and Worfish are more

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<sup>2</sup> [www.provalisresearch.com](http://www.provalisresearch.com)

appropriate to insulate the valence of political text, an approach which might be applied to the current dataset in later work.

Arguably, the advantage of this approach is that it focuses not only on debates which are designated as EU debates, but can also detect mentions of EU related keywords in other debates. This might be a way to overcome the problem that “isolating” the EU dimension is very challenging’ (Auel and Raunio, 2011, p. 23). The content analysis approach chosen here is thus an appropriate methodological approach to analyse the extent to which Europe is debated by national parliaments in the plenary collectively and, as a second step, to analyse to what extent different party groups differ in the extent to which they talk about Europe. The first paper thus sheds light on the activity of national parliaments with regard to their communication function.

Paper 2 focuses on government oversight in the form of resolutions. For this purpose, a novel dataset was constructed consisting of 3244 resolutions issued by the parliaments of five countries in the time period from the mid/late 1990s until the present. These resolutions were downloaded from the parliaments’ websites and then analysed quantitatively. Since resolutions and their function are not identical in the different parliaments, a choice of legal instruments to be included had to be made. For the purpose of this thesis, all written statements by parliaments or party groups which express an opinion on the government’s treatment of an EU legal act were included. A distinction was made in the analysis between successful ‘resolutions’ and unsuccessful ‘motions’. In Appendix 4, a list with the different documents which were included for the respective countries can be found.

In a first step, the quantity of resolutions issued by party group per month were analysed using a count model. A negative binominal distribution was chosen given the

over-dispersed distribution of data (Hilbe, 2011, p. 239). It emerged that issue entrepreneurs issued the most motions, whereas government parties were responsible for the majority of successful resolutions. In a second step all resolutions were hand-coded based on the extent to which they are critical or supportive of the government on a Lickert-type scale from -2 (very critical) to 2 (very supportive). The exact coding scheme can be found in Appendix 5. To ensure inter-coder reliability, a subset of resolutions was re-coded by two expert coders. It is important to analyse the valence of resolutions to see whether the activity can actually be seen as serious scrutiny. The resolutions of issue entrepreneurs emerged to be most critical and the ones of government parties as most supportive. In a final step of the analysis, the ratio of the preamble of the resolutions to their operational part was analysed. The rationale here was that a longer preamble and a shorter operational part indicate more ‘politicised’ and less technical scrutiny related to the actual legal acts. This is based on the assumption that the preamble contains more general provisions and overreaching considerations while the actual technical details of the legal acts are discussed in the operational part. This approach was inspired by the work of Huber and Shipan on bureaucratic autonomy. The authors find that shorter texts are indicative of more freedom for the implementing bureaucracy (Huber and Shipan, 2002, p. 73). In the analysis, it emerged that issue entrepreneurs generally issue resolutions with longer preambles and shorter operational parts. Examples of the structure of resolutions from different party groups and countries can be found in Appendix 6.

The three steps of the analysis are appropriate to establish the quantity, quality and impact of parliamentary activity in the form of resolutions by different party groups. It became clear that, as in the case of debates, issue entrepreneurs are very

active and issue many resolutions, which are also very critical. In the case of debates, formal powers do not seem to play an important role. However, it became clear that the resolutions of issue entrepreneurs generally have long preambles and short operational parts, indicating that they are more concerned with ‘smoke and mirrors’ and abstract discussion instead of actual scrutiny which could have a genuine impact.

In contrast to the first two papers, Paper 3 takes a qualitative approach. It analyses the treatment of the Fiscal Compact in four parliaments in depth. The Fiscal Compact as a history-making decision (Peterson and Bomberg, 1999) was chosen since it is an ideal opportunity to observe parliamentary behaviour in a situation of extremely high salience. For the purpose of the case study, fourteen semi-structured interviews were carried out with MPs and party workers. A full list of interviewees can be found in Appendix 9. A qualitative approach was chosen for the last paper to make it possible to uncover the exact mechanisms through which issue entrepreneurs are active and how mainstream parties react to issue entrepreneurs. The qualitative analysis could thus uncover the exact mechanisms for the relationships discovered in the quantitative work of the first two papers. Besides interviews, a content analysis of parliamentary speeches and other documents and of press commentary was undertaken.

The results of the qualitative analysis in Paper 3 confirm the findings of the two quantitative papers. Issue entrepreneurs are indeed most active both in debates and resolutions. However, as expected, they mostly mention a general criticism of the EU in the debates and focus on these points in their resolutions. Mainstream parties are thus forced to engage with issue entrepreneurs on these matters so that stronger possibilities of parliamentary influence might be forgone. Mainstream opposition parties are in a particularly difficult situation, since they have to differentiate themselves from the

government but cannot attack it in the same way as issue entrepreneurs since they share the government's pro-European consensus. However, they can sometimes secure concessions from the government in the form of 'side payments' (Rector, 2011). 'Rebel' government MPs can often have an impact on the government with threats of defection. In general, issue entrepreneurs are overrepresented in the media and used a number of extra-parliamentary venues of influence such as legal action or demonstrations. While the paper focuses specifically on the Fiscal Compact, the interviews made clear that these trends can also be observed in the case of 'normal' legal acts. The methodological approach of Paper 3 thus deepens and complements the findings of Papers 1 and 2.

As to the selection of country cases, overall six countries are covered in this thesis but not all of them are included in each paper for a variety of reasons. Austria, France, Germany, Ireland, Spain and the United Kingdom are covered in this thesis. The eleven 'new' member states which joined the EU in 2004, 2007 and 2013 were excluded given the historical perspective of the study. Since the timeframe of the study from 1992 to 2012, the short length of membership of the new member states would make a meaningful comparison across time impossible. Moreover, the formal systems and practices of the new member states are much more in flux than those of the 'old' member states, so the differences between formal rights and actual activity, which are the main focus of this paper, are much less clear at this stage. The countries were chosen since they represent a diverse range of formal scrutiny powers (see Table 1 on p. 28 above). Austria and Germany have strong scrutiny powers, France and the UK are classified on an intermediate level, and Ireland and Spain are classified as weak. The six countries were chosen since they offer significant variation on key independent



variables such as: the presence of Eurosceptic parties or issue entrepreneurs (very strong in Austria with the Alliance for the Future of Austria [BZO] and FPÖ, but absent in Spain and Germany); public Euroscepticism (strong in the UK and Austria but weak in Germany, Ireland and Spain) and general other factors such as the party system, electoral system and political economy in the context of the Euro crisis. The selection of cases thus followed a diverse selection (Gerring, 2000, p. 97). The selected countries thus represent a good spread over the different independent variables. However, the generalisability is of course still limited and it would be desirable to include additional countries in the analysis in the future.

For Paper 1, all six countries were included in the analysis – the six cases also represent an optimal spread with regard to a distinction of ‘working parliaments’ (e.g. the German *Bundestag*) and ‘debating parliaments’ (such as the House of Commons) (Arter, 1999, p. 211; Loewenberg and Patterson, 1979.) and regarding speaking rights in the plenary. For Paper 2 on resolutions, Ireland is excluded from the analysis since the scrutiny system does not have resolutions that can be attributed to particular party groups. However, the five countries analysed (Austria, France, Germany, Spain and the UK) represent an excellent spread with regard to centralised scrutiny systems (Austria, Spain, UK) and decentralised scrutiny systems in which sectoral committees are involved (France and Germany). For Paper 3, the analysis was limited to four countries (Austria, France, Germany and the UK) for reasons of feasibility. These four countries also allow interesting variation with regard to the case study, the Fiscal Compact Treaty. Whereas Germany and to a lesser extent Austria can be considered ‘donor countries’ Ireland was a recipient of bail-outs and the United Kingdom was (and the Czech Republic) were the only countries which decided not to ratify the Treaty. The impact of

the macro-economic factors could thus also be observed. Given that only lower chambers can be clearly positioned in chain of delegation and accountability and given the extremely heterogeneous nature of upper chambers even among the six countries here, the analysis of Papers 1 and 2 is confined to lower chambers. However, in the case study in Paper 3, the activity of upper chambers is also touched upon.

### **Concluding Remarks**

This thesis contributes to the existing literature by focusing on the divergence between formal powers and actual activity of national parliaments in EU affairs. In contrast to previous studies, it focuses on a larger number of countries and a more extensive time period. Moreover, it analyses the communication and the government control functions of parliament and employs both qualitative and quantitative research methods. By focusing on the role of political parties in general and issue entrepreneurs in particular, this thesis follows a more actor-centred approach than most studies in the field. The main argument of the thesis is that the presence of issue entrepreneurs and internal party cohesion are the most important determinants of actual scrutiny activity, not formal powers. By contrast, formal powers of parliaments in EU affairs do not seem to have a strong impact on activity in the form of resolutions or debates. The impact a further empowerment of national parliaments might have on democratic accountability might thus be overstated, and a further strengthening of the powers of the European Parliament might be the better alternative.

In the following three papers this argument is tested. The first paper focuses on the activity in the form of debates, applying a computer-assisted-content analysis

approach and presenting a novel dataset of parliamentary debates in EU affairs. The second paper quantitatively analyses the extent to which different parties try to control the government by issuing resolutions in EU affairs. It does so by focusing on the number, valence (the extent to which they are critical or supportive of the government) as well as the extent to which the resolutions are politicised or technical in focus using the ratio of the preamble and the operational part as a proxy. The third paper takes the format of a qualitative case study of the Fiscal Compact, drawing on 14 in-depth interviews and document analysis. The paper illustrates the strategies employed by issue entrepreneurs and mainstream parties, their interaction with public opinion and the effectiveness of parliamentary scrutiny. The conclusion synthesizes the findings of the three empirical papers and elaborates on the implications of their findings for democratic accountability in the European Union. Moreover, limitations of the study and potential avenues for future research are briefly discussed. Finally, it proposes some potential ways forward for how national parliaments, together with the European Parliament, could help to alleviate the democratic deficit of the European Union.

# **Paper 1: The Determinants of Debate on EU Affairs in National Parliaments: The Role of Party Politics and Party Cohesion**

## **Abstract**

This paper analyses the activity of national parliaments with regard to parliamentary debates on European Union affairs in their plenary sessions. For this purpose, a computer-assisted content analysis was carried out on the share of EU keywords in parliamentary plenary debates. The findings show that popular Euroscepticism appears to be important in determining scrutiny activity, producing a different effect depending on the nature of the national party system. An important factor in this respect is the presence or absence of issue entrepreneurs on Europe. If parties are collectively in favour of European integration, they want to avoid or minimise debate over Europe when confronted with Eurosceptic voters. Moreover, when parties are internally divided on the EU, popular Euroscepticism incentivises less parliamentary debate. The presence of issue entrepreneurs and internal party cohesion in combination with public Euroscepticism are thus the most important factors determining variation in the extent to which Europe is debated in the plenary among countries and between parties. By contrast, formal powers of national parliaments in EU affairs do not have an effect on the extent to which Europe is debated in the plenary. Hopes that a further increase of formal powers of national parliaments would make them more active in debating EU affairs and thereby bring the EU closer to the citizens and helping to alleviate the democratic deficit are likely to be unfounded. Nevertheless, when issue entrepreneurs are present, parliament is reactive to public opinion on EU affairs and thus fulfils its communication function adequately.

## **Introduction**

In the European Union (EU), citizens can provide democratic input via two channels. First, they can directly elect the members of the European Parliaments (EP). Second, citizens can make their voices heard via an indirect route of democratic control which runs from the citizens to their national parliaments and from the national parliaments to the national governments. The national governments are in turn represented in the Council of Ministers. It has frequently been claimed that the European Parliament is at the moment still unable to fulfil the legitimating function of a parliament adequately (Chryssochou, 1998; Kiiver 2012; Schmitter, 2000; Siedentrop, 2001). National parliaments arguably have been weakened by the process of European integration by what has been called ‘de-parliamentarisation’ (Holzhacker, 2002; Maurer and Wessels, 2001; Moravcsik, 1994). This dual lack of legitimacy – the loss of power of national parliaments combined with a European Parliament which still cannot compensate fully for the latter - is said to constitute what is called the ‘democratic deficit’ of the European Union.

This paper focuses on the ‘communication function’ of national parliaments (Norton, 1993) with regard to the extent to which they debate European affairs and bring them closer to the citizens. The findings of this paper suggest that there are differences between countries in terms of the proportionate frequency of EU keywords arising in parliamentary debates as well as between different types of parties in the plenary. This indicates variation in the extent to which they use debates as a form of parliamentary scrutiny in EU affairs. Thus, parliaments differ in the emphasis they put on the communication function with regard to EU affairs. Moreover, parliaments seem to be reactive to major events at the EU level with regard to the fulfilment of the

communications function, indicating a degree of responsiveness. For some countries, the frequency and extent of debate on the EU appears to peak around treaty reforms. This finding seems to contribute to a rather positive picture of the involvement of national parliaments with regard to their communication function. Parliaments do indeed talk more about Europe when the topic is important to its voters. However, this only happens when Eurosceptic issue entrepreneurs are there to trigger the debates. Populist issue entrepreneurs might thus a positive role in this regard by helping to bring Europe to the agenda, forcing mainstream parties to talk about the topic and thus ensuring the parliaments fulfil their communication function adequately.

Moreover, parliaments as a whole also seem to be reactive to preference of the voters with regard to EU affairs: Popular Euroscepticism is an important factor in determining scrutiny activity in the plenary. However, different types of parties vary in their reaction to the preferences of the voters on Europe. If parties are collectively in favour of European integration or do not care deeply about it, they would tend to avoid debate over Europe when confronted with a Eurosceptic electorate. If parties are present which are Eurosceptic and for which Europe is a salient plank of their platform ('issue entrepreneurs'), these parties arguably force debate over Europe and popular Euroscepticism leads to an increase in debate on Europe. The presence of issue entrepreneurs does thus seem to have a positive impact on the role of national parliaments in fostering democratic accountability in the EU as far as the communication function is concerned.

Another important factor determining activity is the extent to which parties' preferences are on Europe are in line with the electorate and the degree to which the parties themselves are divided or united on Europe. When parties are internally divided

over Europe, popular Euroscepticism actually leads to less debate on EU affairs, since MPs want to avoid publicising their divisions. However, when parties have a coherent position on the EU, popular Euroscepticism leads to more scrutiny in the form of parliamentary debates. The negative effect of popular Euroscepticism increases as internal dissent gets stronger. In other words, the more divided a party is on the EU, the less it will talk about it in the plenary if the voters are Eurosceptic.

These findings imply that the presence of issue entrepreneurs on Europe and internal dissent on the topic within parties and the interaction with the factors and public Euroscepticism can explain most of the variation regarding parliamentary activity in the form of debates on EU affairs between countries. Formal scrutiny powers do not seem to have a strong impact in the form of debates. Parliaments with strong formal powers will thus not necessarily fulfil their communication function better. Hopes that an increase in formal scrutiny powers would make parliaments more active in EU affairs, and that they consequently might help to bring Europe closer to the citizen by debating it more frequently, thus helping to overcome the democratic deficit, might be unfounded.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. The second section presents the theoretical approach and the hypotheses. The third section describes the paper's chosen method and independent variables. It also explains the rationale for the selection of country cases. The fourth section contains the model specification and analysis. The fifth section discusses the results.

## Theory and Hypotheses

The study of the role of national parliaments in the European Union (EU) has experienced recurrent growth in recent years. Academics have increasingly applied rigorous methods in studying the determinants of variation in parliamentary oversight capacity (Winzen, 2012; 2013) and have moved on to study the actual practice of parliamentary scrutiny (Auel, Rozenberg and Tacea, 2015; Sprungk, 2010), two approaches that until recently have been missing in the literature (Auel, 2011, p. 67, Raunio, 2009, p. 318). Moreover, scholars have started to analyse parliamentary debates and questions, another hitherto under-researched field of parliamentary activity, especially with regard to EU affairs (e.g. Auel and Raunio, 2014a, 2014b; Brouard and Navarro, 2014; De Wilde, 2014; Garcia Lupato, 2014; Rauh, 2015; Wendler 2011, 2013a, 2014b).

Parliamentary debates can be considered a very important aspect of parliamentary activity in EU affairs because they fulfil a crucial ‘communication function’ vis-à-vis the citizens (Auel and Raunio, 2014a, p. 2; Norton, 1993). Legislative debates are generally a useful resource for researchers, since they are publicly available and Members of Parliament (MPs) use them for a variety of purposes (Proksch and Slapin, 2010, p. 335). Debates thus present an excellent opportunity to observe different preferences and emphases given to the EU in different countries and in different political contexts. The present paper thus tries to answer the following questions: *‘Under which conditions are EU affairs debated in national parliaments?’* and *‘Which factors explain the differences in debating EU affairs between countries and parties?’*



The extent to which and the way in which Europe is discussed in the plenaries is also a very good indicator for the politicization of EU affairs. De Wilde defines politicization in the present context as ‘an increase in polarization of opinions, interests or values and the extent to which they are publicly advanced towards the process of policy formulation within the EU’ (De Wilde, 2011, p. 560). Hooghe and Marks argue that the ‘permissive consensus’ which is said to have characterized European integration for many decades has given rise to a ‘constraining dissensus’ (Hooghe and Marks, 2009, p. 13). Europe has become a contested issue which is intertwined with domestic politics, even though most mainstream parties do not openly compete on the issue (Hooghe and Marks, 2009, p. 10). The issue is usually exploited by extreme parties at the left and right (De Vries, 2007, p. 267; Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2008). These parties seek to bring an issue on the parliamentary agenda which has not been extensively discussed previously and have thus been termed ‘issue entrepreneurs’ (Hobolt and De Vries, 2015, p. 3). Issue entrepreneurs distinguish themselves from mainstream parties in that they take a position on a particular issue which differs more from the mainstream parties than the mainstream parties positions’ among each other – there is a larger ‘framing distance’ (Van der Wardt, 2015, p. 841). Issue entrepreneurs can be expected to be active on an issue, in these case European Union affairs, in a number of forms: By mentioning the issue frequently in plenary debates, asking many oral and written questions and by issuing a large number of resolutions on the topic. Activity in the form of parliamentary debates can be considered especially important for issue entrepreneurs. Mentioning EU affairs frequently in (publicly available) parliamentary debates helps them to establish ‘ownership’ of the issue (Dahlberg and Martinsson, 2015, p. 826). Debates have a higher level of visibility compared to other parliamentary instruments (Auel and

Raunio, 2014a, p. 4). This makes it more likely that the issue entrepreneurs are also associated with the respective issue in the press (Van der Brug and Berghout, 2015, p. 882). Consequently, they also might gain more attention in electoral campaigns (Lefevre, Tresch and Walgrave 2015b, p. 901). Moreover, parliamentary debates are parliamentary instruments with relatively low costs in terms of resources (Caulier and Dumont, 2010, p.48). Other instruments, such as resolutions require more resources for drafting and research, which issue entrepreneurs as (generally) smaller and less well funded parties usually lack.

If parties act a strategy as issue entrepreneurs, they are usually coherent on the issue in question (Hobolt and De Vries, 2015, p. 19). These parties can thus be expected to be less willing to discuss the issue of Europe extensively. Issue entrepreneurs frequently try to exploit the internal dividedness of mainstream parties by using European integration as a ‘wedge issue’ (Van der Wardt, De Vries and Hobolt, 2014, p. 986). The presence of issue entrepreneurs in a party system is thus likely to have a profound impact on mainstream parties regarding the extent to which they debate EU affairs. The behaviour of mainstream parties is indeed very important in determine the chances of success for new challenger parties such as issue entrepreneurs (Meguid, 2008, p. 300). If issue entrepreneurs are the only parties which talk about an issue, they might soon be regarded as most competent on the issue by a voter which increases their chances of electoral success, especially if the issue happens to be topical (Budge, 2015, p. 767). Mainstream parties might thus as well want to engage in an issue which is championed and popularized by issue entrepreneurs – ‘issue convergence’ occurs (Walgrave, Tresch and Lefevre, 2015, p. 779). In the present context, we might thus expect mainstream parties to talk more about Europe as well when issue entrepreneurs

on Europe are present – we are likely to see an increase in the extent parties collectively talk about Europe in an aggregate analysis at the parliamentary level. To engage more with the topic championed by issue entrepreneurs might help mainstream parties to contain the success of issue entrepreneurs by making it more difficult for them to claim ownership over the issue (Walgrave, Tresch and Lefevre, 2015, p. 779).

However, being an issue entrepreneur on Europe only pays off when the issue is salient with the electorate and – since most issue entrepreneurs are Eurosceptic – if the electorate is critical of the EU. The underlying rationale is that parliaments in countries with a Eurosceptic electorate might be more inclined to be active in scrutinising the government. Eurosceptic publics expect MPs to be more assertive in EU affairs. In contrast, where there is a permissive consensus in favour of the EU, MPs might have fewer incentives to invest their time and resources in scrutiny (Bergman, 1997, p. 379). Arguably, this might also hold true for parliamentary debates, prompting the following hypothesis:

**H1:** Parliamentary debate on Europe increases with the strength of Euroscepticism in the electorate.

Since issue entrepreneurs benefit from talking about Europe and mainstream parties have to react to them as described above, we can thus assume that if issue entrepreneurs feature strongly in the party system, more Euroscepticism would lead to more debate on Europe in general when measured collectively at the parliamentary, aggregate level. However, issue entrepreneurs themselves can be expected to be particularly active. For them, there would be higher benefits from scrutiny activity

relative to costs. If parties do not care deeply about Europe or are generally accommodating of it, but are faced with a Eurosceptic electorate, MPs might want to avoid extended debate over Europe unless they are forced to do so by issue entrepreneurs (Auel and Raunio, 2014b, p. 16). They face potentially high costs by debating an issue on which they diverge from their voters and have to balance this risk with the need to engage with the attacks of the issue entrepreneurs. It is thus hypothesized that parties which are issue entrepreneurs talk more about Europe in the plenary:

**H2a:** There is more debate on Europe in parliament as a whole if issue entrepreneurs are represented in a party system.

**H2b:** Issue entrepreneurs talk more about Europe when faced with public Euroscepticism, while mainstream parties talk less about the topic when the public is Eurosceptic.

It is in the interest of parties, or more precisely, the party leadership, to present a coherent position to the electorate (Proksch and Slapin, 2012, p. 522). When parties are divided on a significant issue such as European integration, they are likely not to favour public scrutiny, for example in the form of debate, on the issue (Auel, 2007, p. 492). This holds true for both government and mainstream opposition parties (Van der Wardt, De Vries and Hobolt, 2014, p. 989-990). This is especially the case since issue entrepreneurs might use the topic as a wedge issue to expose division in the other parties (Van der Wardt, De Vries and Hobolt, 2014, p. 986; Kam, 2009, p. 134). Parties might want to prevent these divisions from becoming apparent, since their position on

the EU has a significant effect on the propensity of voters to vote for them, as De Vries and Tillman have shown (2011, p. 10). Whether to be active in scrutiny then becomes a question of when the rewards of being perceived as active outweigh the costs of presenting an incoherent party image. From a certain level of internal divisiveness onwards, higher levels of Euroscepticism might actually lead to less public activity, given that the stakes are higher: voters who feel strongly about Europe would tend to perceive disunity on EU affairs more negatively. High levels of Euroscepticism thus increase the benefits of being perceived as active in EU affairs, but also increase the costs of the party being perceived as divided on the issue. At the party level, it is thus suspected that parties which are internally divided talk less about Europe than parties which are internally cohesive. Thus:

**H3a:** There is less debate on Europe in the plenary when parties are internally divided on Europe.

**H3b:** The effect of Euroscepticism is positive when parties are cohesive on Europe and negative when parties are divided on Europe.

The literature on national parliaments has recognized that formal scrutiny powers do not necessarily mirror their actual activity in EU affairs (Auel and Benz, 2005; Pollack and Smolinski, 2003; Sprungk, 2007). Formal scrutiny powers mostly concern the extent to which parliament receives information on EU affairs and the extent to which it can issue binding mandates to the government (Winzen, 2012, p. 660). An alternative analysis argues that parliaments with weaker formal powers might

be more induced to use softer forms of activity, such as parliamentary debates, since this approach makes more sense for them than investing resources in trying to influence the government directly with their limited means (Auel, 2009, p. 21). However, this paper holds that formal rights do not have a strong impact on the extent to which parliaments use the plenary as a forum for activity in EU affairs. The role of formal rights will thus be included as a control variable in the analysis. Moreover, the extent to which Europe is topical in a particular country at a given point in time might have an impact on the extent to which Europe is debated in the plenary. This might for example be the case when a country currently holds the EU Council Presidency, which is included as a control variable. Furthermore, institutional constraints, such as the extent to which the government can control the agenda in the plenary might have an impact on the ability of issue-entrepreneurs to drive debate on Europe. Plenary agenda control is thus also included as a control variable. In the second part of the analysis, it is analysed whether the findings on the aggregate level of parliaments can be confirmed at the level of parties. For this purpose, a subset of debates was coded by party group, as explained below. Two of the hypotheses were then also tested at the party level: whether a party's status as an issue entrepreneur and its internal cohesiveness influence the extent to which MPs of the party speak about Europe (Hypotheses 2a and 3a). The size of a party as its share of all parliamentary seats is included as a proxy for the resources available to a party (Caulier and Dumont, 2010, p. 48).

## **Method and Data**

The current paper takes a somewhat different methodological approach than previous studies on parliamentary debates. Firstly, it quantitatively analyses a set of countries over an extended period of time. This makes it possible to analyse how parliamentary activity in the form of debates differs between countries and over time, and which factors influence the extent of such activity. This paper focuses not only on EU debates which have been identified as such by the national parliaments themselves on their websites, but analyses debates using a computer-assisted content analysis approach. It also provides insight to the extent to which formal EU-oversight powers of national parliaments relate to the use of an alternative instrument of parliamentary activity in EU affairs – parliamentary debates. Secondly, the time-series approach at the level of parliaments is accompanied by a quantitative analysis of difference between parties in debating EU affairs for a subset of debates. This allows assessing the extent to which party political difference drive different patterns of activity in the parliamentary scrutiny of EU affairs.

To assess how the independent variables impact the extent to which EU affairs are debated in the plenary , a content analysis was undertaken (Neuendorf, 2000). Instead of focusing on individual debates which are flagged as EU debates by the parliaments themselves, the analysis is aimed at the level of individual words. The advantage of this approach that it captures mentions of Europe in all debates. The rationale here is that if more EU keywords come up in debates, this indicates that the parliament attributes more attention to Europe. Similar approaches have frequently been used to analyse the salience of and attention given to an issue (Budge, 2015). This approach not only focuses on debates which are designated as EU debates, but can also

detect mentions of EU related keywords in other debates. The texts include not only parliamentary speeches, but also oral questions and adjournment debates, i.e. the totality of debates as they took place in the chamber and were recorded in the minutes. Written question and answers, as well as appendixes, were excluded. In order to improve comparability across countries and parliaments in which debates take place with different frequencies and have different lengths (possibly for linguistic reasons), the proportion of EU keywords in all debates in a certain month was calculated, instead of the proportion of EU keywords in individual debates. For reasons of feasibility, two months per year were analysed: March and October. These months are characterised by strong parliamentary activity in all countries under analysis, and usually no breaks take place in these months. The timeframe of the analysis at the level of parliaments is 1992 (ratification of the Maastricht Treaty) until 2012. This timeframe was chosen since the Maastricht Treaty has frequently been described as the starting point for significant politicization and stronger European integration (Boerzel and Risse 2009; Marks, Hooghe and Blank, 1996).

Two dictionaries were constructed for the present analysis: one dictionary containing EU keywords and one dictionary containing general keywords from a variety of policy areas (foreign affairs, taxes, etc.). This ‘general’ dictionary is based on the categories of the Comparative Agendas Project (see for example Baumgartner, Green-Pedersen and Wilkerson, 2006; Brouard, Costa and König, 2012). The dictionaries were then applied to the documents for each country/month using the programme QDAMiner/WordStat.<sup>3</sup> Examples of the keywords can be found in Appendix 1. The proportion of EU keywords relative to all keywords in the general dictionary was then

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1. [Http://provalisresearch.com/](http://provalisresearch.com/)



calculated.<sup>4</sup> Using this dictionary based approach; it is possible to infer the relative difference in attention to the EU in the different parliaments, as well as changes over time. The first part of the analysis thus focuses exclusively at the level of parliament as a whole over a relatively long time period. In contrast the second part of the analysis does not analyse the debates as one piece of text, but instead divides the texts by party so that the share of EU keywords of all words spoken by members of each party can be analysed. The speech segments had to be coded by hand using the programme QDAMiner. The independent variables to test the hypotheses are operationalized as follows: Euroscepticism is operationalized as the share of respondents in Eurobarometer surveys who hold that the membership of their country is ‘a bad thing’ minus the share of those who think it is ‘a good thing’, following (2012a). The variable is constructed in such a way that higher values indicate more public Euroscepticism. The reported values before the selected month of March and October were used, so that when the survey was conducted in February and then again in November, then February values were used for both the March and October observations.

The dissent within the parties regarding European integration was calculated based on a question on this issue in the Chapel Hill Expert Survey dataset (CHES, 2012). In the 1984-1999 surveys, dissent is indicated by the experts on a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being complete agreement and 5 being complete dissent. In the surveys after

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2. In order to ensure that the EU keywords were rightfully classified as such, a spreadsheet consisting of 15% of the EU and general keywords respectively was given to a second expert coder who was asked to identify the keywords which can be classified as EU-related. Based on the agreement between the keywords which were identified as EU-related by the second coder and those which were originally classified as such, Krippendorff's Alpha was calculated, a common coefficient of inter-coder reliability (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 221). It expresses how much better the agreement between the two coders is than what could be expected by chance (p.222). The index was calculated for the English and German dictionaries, and took the value of 0.768 and 0.923 respectively, which is equivalent to 94.5% and 98.3% of agreement respectively. The value for both dictionaries is thus clearly above the commonly accepted minimum threshold of 0.667 (p. 242), indicating that inter-coder reliability is satisfactory. For the third coder, Krippendorff's Alpha was 0.825 for the English and 0.715 for the German dictionary, which is equivalent to 95.9% and 93% of agreement respectively.

1999, dissent is indicated on a 1 -10 scale, so the values were rescaled to 1 – 5 to ensure comparability. The mean dissent for all parties represented in parliament in a given electoral cycle was then calculated. Missing values were filled in using linear interpolation. For the analysis at the party level, the respective mean internal dissent scores for the parties were used. The left-right score of a party for the analysis at the party level is also based on CHES. The information on the composition of parliament and government and opposition status was taken from the ParlGov database (Döring and Manow, 2012).

The presence of an issue entrepreneur is undertaken following the approach of De Vries and Hobolt (2012). The issue entrepreneur score is generated by multiplying the salience score for each party in parliament with the sum of the mean party position of all parties in parliament on the EU minus the party position of the party (De Vries and Hobolt, 2012, p. 256). The salience score and the party position on European integration are both included in the CHES survey. They are measured on a 1 to 5 and a 1 to 7 score scale respectively, with higher values indicating higher salience and a more positive position on European integration respectively. The distance between the position of a party on the EU and the mean party position is thus negative when the party is more pro-European than the mean of all parties and positive if it is more Eurosceptic (De Vries and Hobolt, 2012, p. 256). For the analysis at the level of parliament, the sum of the issue entrepreneur values for all parties in parliament was calculated for each year the survey took place and an 'issue entrepreneurship score' was generated. The issue entrepreneurship score used here is thus an aggregate measure and a continuous variable. A parliament with one highly Eurosceptic party might thus have the same issue entrepreneurship score as a parliament with several moderately

Eurosceptic parties. For the analysis at the party level, the issue entrepreneur scores for the respective parties were used. Missing values were filled in using linear interpolation. Furthermore, two interaction terms have been included in the analysis for popular Euroscepticism and the dissent within parties, and for Euroscepticism and the presence of issue entrepreneurs.

A possible criticism of this operationalisation might be that the measurement of issue entrepreneurs is endogenous to activity, i.e. that the experts who code the parties for the CHES survey code these parties as seeing the EU as salient because they display active behaviour in the plenary in the first place. However, the results at the party level remained significant when only using the EU position without the salience score. This is arguably less problematic since the EU position as such is unrelated to the parties' activity in the form of debates. Moreover, additional robustness checks on the party level were conducted which showed significant results for an operationalisation of issue entrepreneurs as party families as well as when using an operationalisation based on the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP) (Table 11, Appendix 3). These two operationalisations cannot be regarded as endogenous. While a classification of party family is not connected to particular stance in the EU the CMP data are based on the analysis of parties' manifestos and are thus not related to their activity in the plenary (CMP, 2015). These robustness checks thus show the observed effect of issue entrepreneurs is not endogenous to their activity in the first place.

The variable concerning the formal rights of national parliaments is based on the results of a recent paper by Winzen (2012, p. 663). Winzen focuses on information rights, the involvement of EACs and sectoral committees, as well as on mandating rights. Information rights comprise the extent to which MPs have access to EU

documents and whether or not the government provides accompanying explanatory memoranda (Winzen, 2012, p. 661). Explanatory memoranda are assigned double the weight of mere information rights, since they help to save the parliament from information overload (Winzen, 2012, p. 662). All other indicators are equally weighed (ibid.). Processing refers to whether the parliament involves EU-specialised committees and has a scrutiny reserve (ibid.). Finally, Winzen takes into account whether the parliament has mandating rights or not (ibid.). For each of these dimensions, a parliament can score from 0 to 1 (ibid.). He aggregates the powers of parliaments in this regard on a scale from 0 to 3, with 3 being the highest value. The control variable for agenda control is based on the parliamentary agenda control index by Doering (1995, p. 225). The index was adopted to include only the countries studies here, with a score of 0 indicating complete control of the agenda by the government (as in Ireland and the UK), 1 standing for a presidents' conference in which the government has a seat share higher than its share in the chamber as a whole (as it is the case in France) and 2 indicating a consensual agreement by party groups in the presidents' conference, which however can be overturned by the majority (observed in Austria, Germany and Spain) (ibid.).

The following countries were chosen as country cases for both analyses: Austria, Germany, France, Spain, Ireland and the UK. The ten 'new' member states which joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 were excluded because of the historical perspective of the study. Given the timeframe of the study from 1992 to 2012, the short length of membership of the new member states would make a meaningful comparison across time impossible. Moreover, the countries were chosen because they represent an excellent institutional spread and the highest possible variation regarding the independent variables of the study. The aim was thus to select a diverse set of cases

(Gerring, 2000, p. 97). Thus, the analysis includes countries with a very Eurosceptic electorate, such as Austria and the UK, as well as countries with generally more pro-European voters such as Ireland. Moreover, countries with strong formal scrutiny powers, such as Austria, and those with rather weak formal scrutiny powers, such as Ireland, are included. There is also strong variation regarding the average dissent within parties on European integration, with Austria and Germany showing very low values and the UK with very high values. The same holds true for the presence of Euroscepticism in the party system and the salience of the EU, as expressed by the issue entrepreneurship score. The present cases thus present a good spread of the independent variables and inference will be possible beyond these particular cases.. However, the extent to which the results can be generalised is of course is still limited and in future research more countries should be included. As a robustness check, the analysis was also run excluding each of the countries in turn to make sure that the overall results are not driven by individual country cases as a selection effect (see Table 10, Appendix 3). The results remain substantially similar.

## **Analysis and Results**

### *The Parliamentary Level*

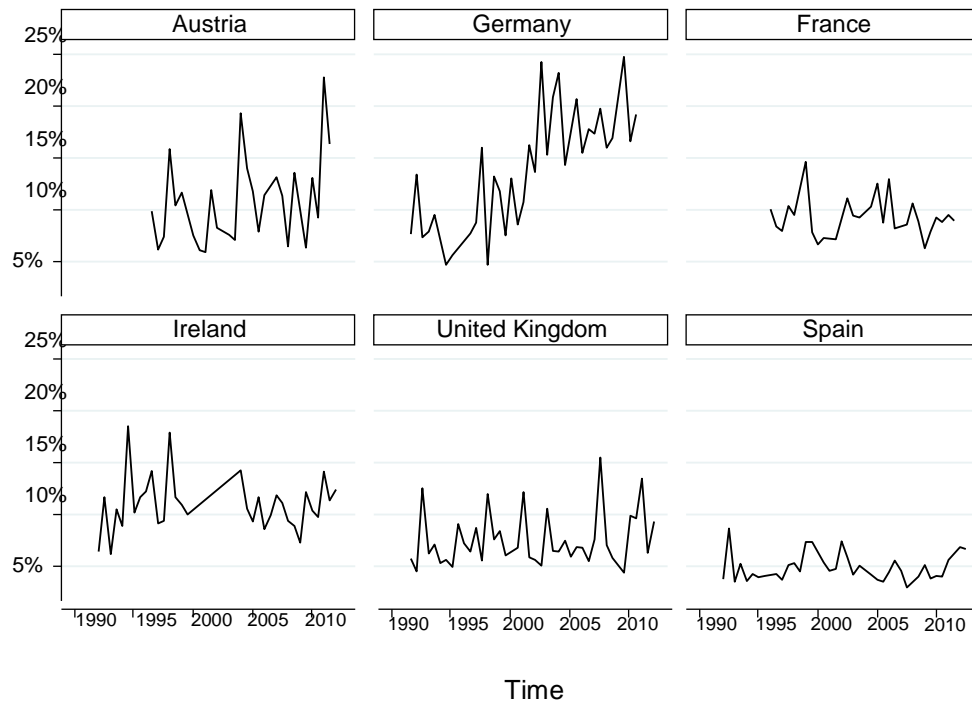
The dataset at the parliamentary level contains data on the share of EU keywords for the first chambers of Austria, France, Germany, Ireland, Spain and the UK for the time period from March 1992 until October 2012. There are however, some gaps in the

dataset, either because no debates took place in the respective month (or only a very small number), because the debates could not be downloaded from the parliament's websites for technical reasons or because of missing independent variables. For some countries, the quality of PDF files available was so poor that they could not be adequately analysed using Optical Character Recognition (OCR). This was for example the case for the French Parliament before 1995. All in all, the dataset contains 252 observations. However, depending on the model used only 172 observations are available. The proportion of missing values is 0.16. The descriptive statistics can be found in Appendix 2.

When analysing the development of the share of EU keywords over time, it becomes apparent that only in Germany is there a strong trend towards increasing talk about Europe. In the other countries, the level remains more or less constant. Certain spikes occur in relation to landmarks in European integration, such as treaty ratification. For example, the ratification of the Amsterdam Treaty, which took place in October 1998, is reflected in the higher scrutiny activity displayed in many countries. The Eurozone crisis seemingly also lead to an increase in the share of EU keywords and thus of debate on Europe (see Figure 1). This finding could be expected, since the Eurozone crisis arguably increased the salience of EU affairs significantly (Risse, 2014, p. 142). However, it becomes obvious that the impact of the crisis on parliamentary debates was rather uneven, and was especially pronounced in creditor countries, most notably Germany, and debtor countries, particularly Ireland. In the Irish case, the referendum on the Fiscal Compact is likely to have played an important role as well. Thus, the impact of the Eurozone crisis in the form of debates in the plenary seems to have

affected national parliaments assymmetrically and has increased differences between them – a result which underlines the findings of Auel and Hoeing (2014, p. 1192).

**Figure 1:** *Change of the percentage of EU keywords relative to all keywords in the general dictionary over time, by country.*



For the statistical analysis at the level of parliaments, a two-level random-intercept model was applied. A multilevel model was chosen given the highly structured nature of the data, with two monthly observations clustered in each country for each year. Arguably, multilevel models have an advantage over alternative methods when the number of observations is small (Ban, 2009). Multilevel or hierarchical models make it possible to model the particular country-level context of the debates. Level 1 represents the individual observations over time, whereas level 2 represents the country level. The random-intercept model allows this paper's analysis to account for the intra-class correlation of the observations within countries and heteroskedasticity (Raudenbusch

and Bryk, 2002). A lagged dependent variable was included in the model to account for temporal autocorrelation, as recommended by Becks and Katz (1995). Since the dependent variable (the share of EU keywords out of all keywords) is a proportion and highly skewed towards zero, a logarithm transformation was undertaken.

The results of the statistical analysis at the parliamentary level show that the fixed-effects coefficients for, internal party dissent, the issue entrepreneur score as well as the interaction term of Euroscepticism and party dissent are statistically significant at the 0.01 level. As for the main effects, the coefficients for Euroscepticism, the presence of issue entrepreneurs and the interaction term between the two are significant at the 0.01 level. The coefficient for Euroscepticism is positive (2.68), as suggested by Hypothesis 1. The effect is also substantially significant. A 5% increase in public Euroscepticism would lead to a 13.4% increase of the share of EU keywords of all words in a given month. The presence of issue entrepreneurs seems to lead to more debate about European issues, as indicated by the positive coefficient (0.08), and as suggested by Hypothesis 2a (see Table 2). For example, if a staunchly Eurosceptic issue entrepreneur party such as UKIP entered parliament for the first time and would increase the collective issue entrepreneurship score by 5, the share of EU keywords would increase by 40%. Auel, Rozenberg and Tacea have similar findings when measuring the impact of these factors on the duration of parliamentary debates on Europe (2015, p. 297). The coefficient for the internal party dissent is negative (-1.06), indicating that more internal party dissent leads to less talk about Europe in the plenary, seemingly confirming Hypothesis 3a. The intra-class correlation  $\rho$  is 0.71, thus 71% of the total variance is at the cluster (country) level. The LR Test shows clearly that a



random-coefficient model is warranted. The explained variance is around 5%.<sup>5</sup> No statistically significant effects for the formal powers of parliament in EU affairs, the Council Presidency or government agenda control could be observed.

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<sup>5</sup> The usefulness of and choice of pseudo-R<sup>2</sup> statistics for multilevel models is debated in the literature (Gelman and Pardoe, 2006; La Huis et al., 2014). The simple measure used here is the following:

$$1 - \frac{\text{variance full model}}{\text{variance empty model}}.$$

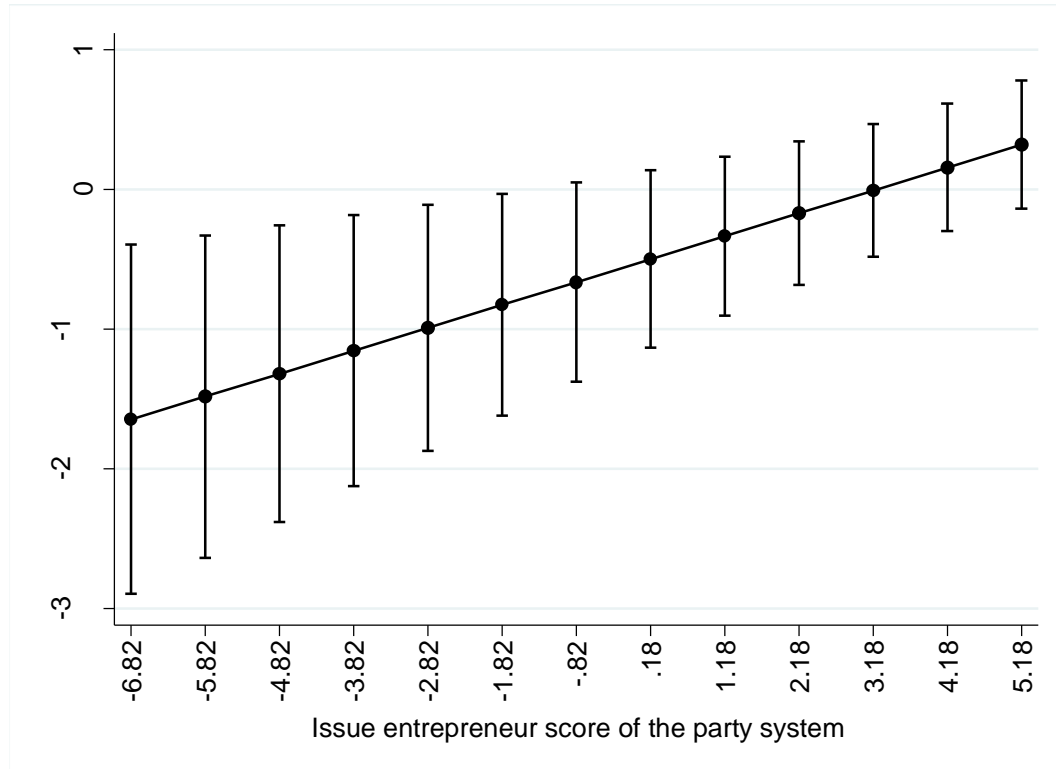
**Table 3:** Effects of the independent variables on the share of EU keywords of all words at the parliamentary level

	<b>Coef.</b>	<b>SE</b>
<b>Lagged Dependent Variable</b>	<b>-0.09 ***</b>	(0.03)
<b>Euroscepticism</b>	<b>2.68 ***</b>	(0.44)
<b>Formal Rights</b>	<b>-0.11</b>	(0.13)
<b>Issue Entrepreneur</b>	<b>0.08 ***</b>	(0.02)
<b>Internal Dissent</b>	<b>-1.06 ***</b>	(0.10)
<b>Presidency</b>	<b>0.05</b>	(0.12)
<b>Agenda Control</b>	<b>0.46</b>	(0.39)
<b>Interaction Euroscepticism x Issue Entrepreneur</b>	<b>0.15 ***</b>	(0.05)
<b>Interaction Euroscepticism x Internal Dissent</b>	<b>-1.66 ***</b>	(0.13)
<b>Constant</b>	<b>-2.29</b>	(0.93)
<b>Random effect parameters</b>		
<b>Sd (Observation)</b>	<b>0.73</b>	(0.13)
<b>Sd Country</b>	<b>0.46</b>	(0.11)
<b>Variance (constant)</b>	<b>0.55</b>	0.20
<b>Variance (residual)</b>	<b>0.22</b>	0.11
<b>Variance explained</b>	<b>5%</b>	
<b>Intra-class correlation</b>	<b>0.71</b>	
<b>AIC</b>	<b>283.4613</b>	
<b>BIC</b>	<b>321.5071</b>	
<b>Observations</b>	<b>185</b>	

Standard errors clustered at the country level. \*=significant at the 0.1 level, \*\*=significant at the 0.05 level, \*\*\*= significant at the 0.01 level.

For the interpretation of the marginal effects, the interaction effects between popular Euroscepticism and internal party dissent as well as the issue entrepreneur score of a party system have to be taken into account. As shown in Figure 2, in the absence of issue entrepreneurs, i.e. when the parties are pro-European and/or indifferent about Europe as to its salience, there will be less debate about Europe in the case of a Eurosceptic electorate. In this case, MPs might want to avoid highlighting possible points of conflicting opinions with voters. In other words, if parties are pro-European or do not care deeply about the EU, they will avoid debate over Europe the more Eurosceptic the voters are. This might change, however, when there are one or more ‘issue entrepreneurs’ in the system which initiate debate over Europe. In this situation, there is alignment between the preferences of the voters and the party leadership for more activity on EU affairs by MPs, causing activity in the form of debate to be especially strong. Hypothesis 2b could thus be confirmed. At the lowest level of the issue entrepreneur score, the substantive effect of a one per cent increase in Euroscepticism is equal to a 1.64% decrease in the share of EU keywords of all keywords. At the highest issue entrepreneur score, the marginal effect is equal to a 0.32% increase (see Figure 3). The strength of the effect of popular Euroscepticism thus increases with the issue entrepreneurship score of the party system. However, the interaction effect is only significant at the 0.1 level from an issue entrepreneurship score of -0.82 onward, so only a negative effect for low issue entrepreneurship scores can be shown to be significant here. Whether a party holds the Council Presidency does not seem to influence its activity in the form of debates. The same holds true for agenda control and speaking rights in the plenary, further indicating that the impact of institutional rules and provisions on actual activity is limited.

**Figure 2:** *Marginal effect of Euroscepticism on the share of EU keywords at different values of the issue entrepreneur score*



*The y-axis shows the marginal effect of Euroscepticism on the share of EU keywords out of general dictionary keywords given the issue entrepreneurship score of the party system. On the x-axis, higher values indicate a higher issue entrepreneurship score of the party system.*

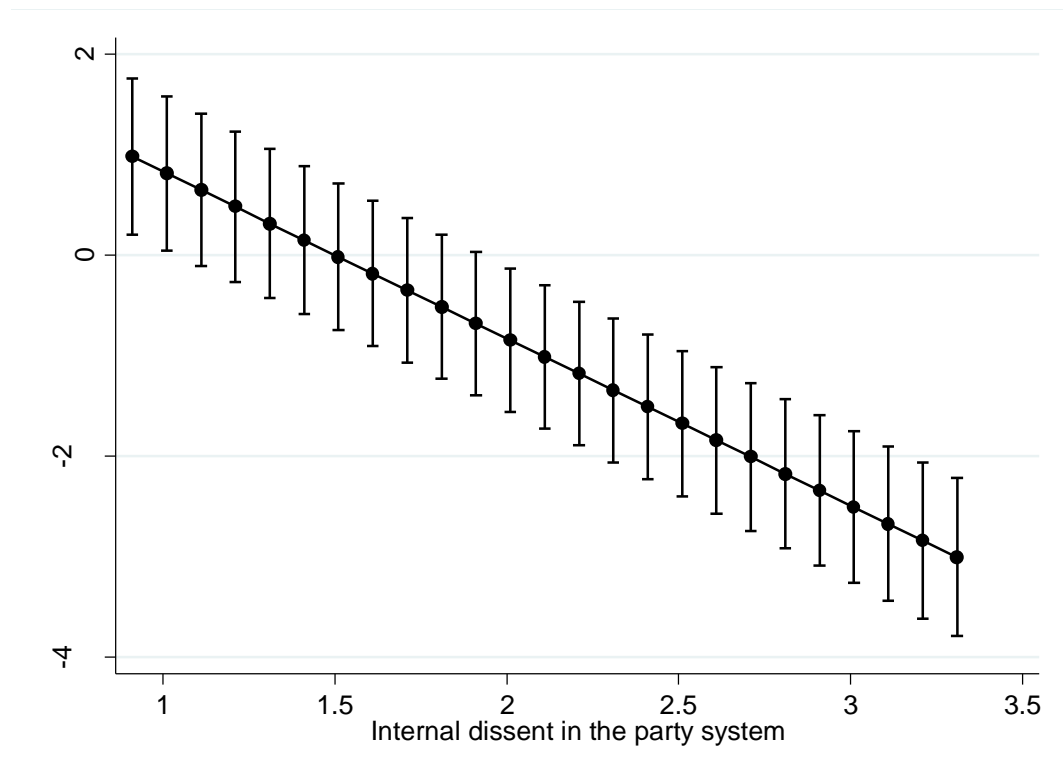
The interaction effect of public Euroscepticism and internal dissent is also very significant for the evaluation of differences between countries with regard to the extent to which Europe is debated in the plenary. The direction of the effect of popular Euroscepticism seems to be negative for high values of internal party dissent and positive for low values of internal party dissent and (see Figure 3). In other words, when parties are internally divided over Europe, they will avoid discussing this issue in public, and the more so when the electorate is more Eurosceptic. An explanation for this might be that a Eurosceptic electorate expects more scrutiny activity on behalf of the MPs. However, to do so only makes sense when parties are internally coherent

regarding their position on the EU. In this context, MPs want to demonstrate that they are active scrutinisers in EU affairs, since it promises electoral benefits. However, when parties are divided over Europe, this division might become apparent to the Eurosceptic voters, which might be harmful for future electoral prospects of the agent, so MPs avoid debate over Europe, as stated by Hypothesis 3b. The party leadership might thus want to suppress debate, since it is connected to potential electoral costs. Substantially, the effect of Euroscepticism on the share of EU keywords of all keywords words remains small, however, ranging from a 0.87% increase at the lowest level of party dissent to a 2.91% decrease in the share of EU keywords of all keywords for the highest level of party dissent. The strength of the effect of Euroscepticism thus increases as the internal party dissent increases. However, as Figure 3 shows, a statistically significant positive effect only exists for very low levels of internal dissent. Additional robustness checks can be found in the Appendix 3.

It thus seems that in the absence of issue entrepreneurs and when European integration remains a depoliticized issue as a consequence, EU issues are not debated in the plenary. This confirms the findings of Hooghe and Marks that only Eurosceptic fringe parties on the extreme left and right will politicize European integration (Hooghe and Marks, 2009, p. 21; De Vries, 2007, p. 267; Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008). The government parties have clearly no incentive to speak frequently on EU affairs if they are divided on the issues (Van der Wardt et al., 2014, p. 989). However, mainstream opposition parties are also reluctant to debate EU affairs since they can anticipate being in a coalition with the current government party in the future (Van der Wardt et al., 2014, p. 995). In contrast, parties which have not been in government and do not have the perspective of forming a coalition can benefit from mobilisation on the issue by

exposing the divisions in the other parties (Van der Wardt et al., 2014, p. 995). Therefore, parliaments with strong issue entrepreneurs are more likely to be active scrutinizers, at least as far as debates are concerned.

**Figure 3:** *Marginal effect of Euroscepticism on the share of EU keywords at different levels of internal dissent*



*The y-axis shows the marginal effect of Euroscepticism on the share of EU keywords out of general dictionary keywords given the level of internal dissent within parties. On the x-axis, higher values indicate more internal dissent within parties.*

### *The Party Level*

At the party level, the analysis includes 31 parties in the 6 countries, and overall 118 observations for the time period from 2010 until 2012 (taking into account missing values when a party did not speak about Europe at all in a given month). A multilevel analysis with random intercepts at the country and party level and standard errors clustered at the party level was undertaken. Descriptive statistics for the party level can be found in Appendix 2, additional robustness checks in Appendix 3.

As the aggregate party means show, issue entrepreneurs show very high shares of EU keywords, notably in Austria where the Eurosceptic Freedom Party (FPO) and the Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZO) (18% and 17% of all keywords respectively) score highest, in Ireland where the score of *Sinn Fein* is particularly high and in the UK where the Eurosceptic Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) (8.4%) scores very high, as do the Conservatives (8.2%). In France, the Eurosceptic *Front National* shows very high values (11% respectively). In Germany, *Die Linke* (16%), the most anti-European party in the *Bundestag* shows a high share of EU keyword

**Table 4:** Results of the analysis at the party level

	<b>Coef.</b>	<b>SE</b>
<b>Internal Dissent</b>	<b>0.08 **</b>	(0.03)
<b>Issue Entrepreneur</b>	<b>0.02 ***</b>	(0.00)
<b>Left-Right position</b>	<b>0.00</b>	(0.01)
<b>Government Participation</b>	<b>0.04</b>	(0.07)
<b>Seat Share</b>	<b>-0.06</b>	(0.35)
<b>Euroscepticism</b>	<b>-0.70 **</b>	(0.41)
<b>Lagged Dep Var</b>	<b>0.05</b>	(0.05)
<b>Constant</b>	<b>-2.78 ***</b>	(0.18)
<b>Variance</b>		
<b>Country level</b>	<b>0.15</b>	(0.08)
<b>Party level</b>	<b>1.20e-23</b>	(2.09e-22)
<b>Residual</b>	<b>0.17</b>	(0.05)
<b>Variance Explained</b>	<b>47%</b>	
<b>Inter-class correlation</b>		
<b>Country level</b>	<b>0.47</b>	(0.13)
<b>Party level</b>	<b>0.00</b>	(0.00)
<b>AIC</b>	<b>165.1155</b>	
<b>BIC</b>	<b>195.593</b>	
<b>Observations</b>	<b>118</b>	
<b>Parties</b>	<b>31</b>	
<b>Countries</b>	<b>6</b>	

*Multilevel model with random intercepts at the country and party level, standard errors clustered at the country level. \*=significant at the 0.1 level, \*\* significant at the 0.05 level, \*\*\*=significant at the 0.01 level.*



The statistical analysis at the party level shows that parties which are issue entrepreneurs mention European issues frequently, confirming Hypothesis 2a at the party level (Table 4). The coefficient for the issue entrepreneur score is 0.027 and significant at the 0.01 level. The score for internal dissent is also significant at the 0.05 level. Surprisingly, the coefficient is positive (0.08), indicating that higher levels of dissent lead to more debate, contrary to Hypothesis 3a. No evidence could be found for differences based on the left/right position of a party. Moreover, the effect for Euroscepticism is rather large -0.70 and significant at the 0.1 level. Since no effect for the seat share of a party could be found, so the often small size of issue entrepreneur party does not affect the validity of the findings.

The results at the party level thus do seem to confirm that issue entrepreneurs play an important role in determining the extent to which Europe is an important issue debated in the plenaries of national parliaments, and hence also the extent to which national parliaments are active in EU affairs. The presence of issue entrepreneurs in the party system appears to be a driving force behind parliamentary scrutiny activity in EU affairs as well as a precondition for politicization of EU matters. An unexpected finding is that the sign of the coefficient for internal dissent is not significant in the analysis at the party level. This implies that under the current specification, more internal party division actually seems to lead to more debate, not less. This seems to confirm the findings of Steenbergen and Scott who showed, based on expert surveys, that Europe is salient for parties with low levels of internal division, less salient for those with a medium level of internal division on the issue and very salient for highly divided parties (2004, p. 186). Spoon confirmed these findings for an analysis of party manifestos (2012, p. 10). At the height of the Euro crisis, when Europe is extremely contested the

party leadership of parties with very high levels of internal dissent might not be able to suppress it anymore, so that Eurosceptic members of these parties are actually very active in discussing EU affairs.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

This paper has suggested a novel approach to analysing the extent to which national parliaments are active in EU affairs in the form of debates, by carrying out a content analysis focusing on the share of EU keywords out of all debates per month. The paper has also presented a new argument with regard to the role of parties in determining parliamentary scrutiny in EU affairs. In so doing, it has provided an original new dataset on the extent to which seven West European parliaments debated Europe in the period from 1992 to 2012. This analysis at the parliamentary level was accompanied by an analysis of differences among parties in debating EU affairs for the time period from 2010 to 2012. The advantage of this approach is that it does not only focus on debates which have been explicitly labeled as EU debates and that it allows to cover an extended time period and a relatively large number of countries. Such a detailed analysis over an extended period of time has not previously been undertaken in the literature and provides a new and clearer pictures on the activity of national parliaments with regard to their communication function as well the relationship between the activity of parliaments in debating EU affairs and their formal powers. Future research will be able to build on these findings and the methodological approach and will be able to develop it further.

The paper has shown that countries differ markedly regarding the extent to which EU affairs are debated in the plenary and thus regarding their actual scrutiny activity. The extent to which Europe is debated seems to increase over time for some parliaments, and tends to peak during major events such as treaty reforms. The formal rights of parliaments do not seem to have an impact on the extent to which EU matters are debated in the plenary. An effect for the Council Presidency or the institutional constraints relating to agenda control could also not be found.

Instead, popular Euroscepticism seems to be an important factor in explaining variation of parliamentary scrutiny activity in the plenary. Another interesting finding is its interaction effect with party cohesion and the issue entrepreneurship score of a parliament. When parties are cohesive regarding Europe, more Euroscepticism leads to more debate on Europe. The effect of Euroscepticism increases the more divided parties are. When issue entrepreneurs are present, they might trigger debate on Europe, leading to more activity in the face of Eurosceptic public opinion. This finding is also interesting with regard to the debate on the politicization of EU affairs. If parties are pro-European and/or do not perceive European integration as salient, Euroscepticism will lead to less debate. MPs are likely to want to signal to their voters that they are active in scrutinizing their own agent, the government in EU affairs. If parties are divided on Europe, an increase in Euroscepticism leads to less debate. MPs might want to hide this internal dissent, which could be interpreted as insufficient representation from their voters. The presence of issue entrepreneurs and internal party cohesion is thus the most important determinant of parliamentary activity in EU affairs in the form of debates.

While the effect of internal dissent is not in the expected direction at the party level, possibly due to particularities of the subset of debates which was analysed, the effect for issue entrepreneurs can clearly be found at the party level. Eurosceptic parties seem to be the main drivers of scrutiny activity in the form of debates since they try to politicize European issues. The findings of this paper further highlight the importance of the role of political parties when studying the scrutiny practice of parliaments in general and parliamentary debates on European Union affairs in particular. The most important determinants in the form of debate are public Euroscepticism and party-political dynamics.

The wider implications of the findings are that an increase in formal powers of national parliaments will not necessarily make them more active in EU affairs in the form of debates. An increase in formal powers will not lead to more activity if the party political factors are not conducive to such activity. In this context, we can not expect formal powers of national parliament alone to alleviate the perceived democratic deficit of the European Union. However, at the same time it is encouraging to see that parliaments do indeed seem to fulfill their communication function with regard to EU affairs and are both reactive to current events such as treaty changes as well as to the voters' preference on Europe. Nevertheless, this is only the case if issue entrepreneurs are present to trigger debates and to force mainstream parties to engage with European affairs. Mainstream parties are more reluctant to talk about Europe and to react to changes in the voters preferences on the topic. In this sense, issue entrepreneurs play an important role in forcing other parties to talk about Europe, enabling parliaments to fulfill their communication function in EU affairs

## Appendix 1: Examples of EU and General Keywords

*Table 5: List of keywords used for the content analysis*

<p>The following keywords refer to EU institutions and policies (see the CAP project). Examples:</p>	<p>Moreover, a ‘general’ keywords dictionary was constructed (also based on the CAP categories). Examples:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European Union/EU</li> <li>• European Community/EC</li> <li>• European Economic Community/EEC</li> <li>• Common Market</li> <li>• Single Market</li> <li>• European Market</li> <li>• European Coal and Steel Community/ECSC</li> <li>• European Atomic Energy Community/EAEC</li> <li>• European Monetary Union/EMU</li> <li>• European Monetary System/EMS</li> <li>• Directive</li> <li>• Regulation</li> <li>• Community law</li> <li>• European law</li> <li>• Common Agricultural Policy/CAP</li> <li>• Common Fisheries Policy</li> <li>• Cohesion Policy</li> <li>• Structural Funds</li> <li>• Regional Policy</li> <li>• Common Foreign and Defence Policy</li> <li>• Euro/Eurozone</li> <li>• Stability and Growth Pact</li> <li>• Transport Policy</li> <li>• European Social Policy</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• austerity</li> <li>• business cycle</li> <li>• revenue</li> <li>• production</li> <li>• profits</li> <li>• foreign exchange reserves</li> <li>• currency</li> <li>• discount rate</li> <li>• public finance</li> <li>• transfer payments</li> <li>• duties</li> <li>• privacy laws</li> <li>• same-sex marriage</li> <li>• public order</li> <li>• racism</li> <li>• race</li> <li>• anti-racism</li> <li>• anti-racist</li> <li>• ethnic</li> <li>• ethnicity</li> <li>• immigrants</li> <li>• asylum seekers</li> <li>• ethnic groups</li> <li>• ethnic minorities</li> <li>• ethnic relations</li> <li>• race relations</li> <li>• immigration</li> <li>• immigrant</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul>

*Note: keywords used by the Comparative Agendas Project to search for EU influence. Source: Brouard, Costa and König, 2012 and own elaboration.*

## Appendix 2: Descriptive Statistics

*Table 6: The proportion of EU keywords relative to all keywords in the general keywords dictionary*

Country	Observations	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Austria	27	.10	.05	.05	.22
France	27	.09	.06	.06	.14
Germany	34	.13	.04	.04	.24
Ireland	33	.10	.06	.06	.18
Spain	37	.05	.02	.02	.08
UK	40	.07	.04	.04	.15

*Table 7: Descriptive Statistics for the Independent Variables (country level)*

	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Euroscepticism	224	-0.35	0.21	-0.8	0.11
Issue Entrepreneur	227	1.92	0.41	0.91	3.31
Internal Dissent	227	-1.39	2.05	-6.82	5.67
Formal Powers	257	1.45	0.47	0.33	2.16

*Table 8: Descriptive Statistics for the party level*

	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
EU Keywords	215	-2.54	0.75	-5.04	-1.17
Euroscepticism	270	-0.28	0.24	-0.59	.11
Issue Entrepreneur	212	-0.56	3.35	-5.24	9.12
Internal Dissent	212	2.80	1.17	0.83	5.44
Left/Right	212	4.62	2.20	1.11	9.88
Seat Share	193	0.17	0.17	0	0.54

### Appendix 3: Robustness Checks

Table 9: Robustness checks for the analysis at the country level. All models are mixed-effects multilevel mode with random intercepts and clustered standard errors at the country level. The model also shows the explained variance/pseudo  $R^2$  and the inter-class correlation. Model 1: Issueent as dummy, 1=issueent score  $>1$ . Model 2: CHES EU position.; Model 3: CMP EU Position (positive minus negative mentions, per108-per110, sum of all parties). \*=significant at 0.1 level, \*\*=significant at 0.05 level, \*\*\*=significant at 0.01 level. Standard errors in parentheses below. Random effects parameters omitted. As Table 9 below shows, the findings at the country level remain robust when the issue entrepreneur score is used as a dummy and for the interaction effect with Euroscepticism when the CHES EU Position is used instead of the issue entrepreneurship score. The findings are not significant for operationalisations using CMP data on Europe and the CHES EU position.

Table 10: Robustness checks for the analysis at the country level. All models are mixed-effects multilevel mode with random intercepts and clustered standard errors at the country level. The model also shows the explained variance/pseudo  $R^2$  and the inter-class correlation. Model 1: Excluding Austria. Model 2: Excluding France. Model 3: Excluding Germany. Model 4: Excluding Ireland. Model 5: Excluding Spain. Model 6: Excluding United Kingdom.

Table 11: Robustness checks at the party level. Model 1: Linear OLS Regression with robust standard errors at the country level. All other models are mixed-effect multilevel models with random intercepts at the country and party level. Model 2: Issue entrepreneur score as dummy  $>1$ . Model 3: CHES EU Position. Model 4: CMP EU Position (positive minus negative mentions of the EU, per 108-per 110) and CMP

Left/Right Position (rile). Model 5: CMP Party dummies. \*=significant at .1 level, \*\*=significant at .05 level, \*\*\*-significant at .01 level. Standard errors in parentheses below. Random effects parameters omitted.. auelAs Table 10 below shows, the analysis of debates at the party level remains significant the results remain the same when using OLS with standard errors clustered at the country level instead of a multilevel model (Model 1). The model also remains significant when issue is operationalized as a dummy with parties with an issue s entrepreneurship core >0 classified as issue entrepreneurs (Model 2). It also remains significant when using the CHES EU position as an operationalisation for parliamentary Euroscepticism instead of the issue entrepreneurship score (Model 3). When using the differences of positive and negative sentences in the CMP database, thus ruling out endogeneity problems due to CHES expert judgements the model is also stable (Model 4). An analysis with dummies of party families yields significant results for Communist, Green and Special Interest party – arguable parties which can be classified as issue entrepreneurs- when compared to the baseline category, Social Democratic parties (Model 5).



**Table 9:**  
Robustness  
checks for  
the analysis  
of debates  
at the  
county level.

Multilevel  
models with  
random  
intercepts at  
the country  
and party  
level.

Model 1:  
Issue  
entrepreneur  
score > 1  
(dummy)

Model 2:  
CHES EU  
position

Model 3:  
CMP EU  
position.

	Model1	Model2	Model3
<b>Internal Dissent</b>	<b>-1.146***</b>	<b>-0.624**</b>	<b>-0.756***</b>
	(0.178)	(0.296)	(0.222)
<b>Issuent Score &gt; 1</b>	<b>0.616***</b>		
	(0.065)		
<b>Euroscepticism</b>	<b>2.420***</b>	<b>-3.698</b>	<b>1.141</b>
	(0.787)	(4.642)	(0.785)
<b>Formal Rights</b>	<b>-0.074</b>	<b>-0.035</b>	<b>-0.090</b>
	(0.096)	(0.126)	(0.110)
<b>Euroscepticism x Internal Dissent</b>	-1.780***	-0.877*	-1.136***
	(0.299)	(0.521)	(0.398)
<b>Euroscpeticism x Issueent Score &gt; 1</b>	<b>1.591***</b>		
	(0.466)		
<b>Presidency</b>	<b>0.074</b>	<b>0.053</b>	<b>0.039</b>
	(0.109)	(0.126)	(0.137)
<b>Plenary Agenda</b>	<b>0.500</b>	<b>0.552*</b>	<b>0.471</b>
	(0.398)	(0.324)	(0.360)
<b>CHES EU Position</b>		0.054	
		(0.115)	
<b>Euroscepticism x CHES EU Position</b>		0.876	
		(0.841)	
<b>CMP EU Position</b>			<b>0.007</b>
			(0.006)
<b>Euroscepticism x CMP EU Position</b>			<b>0.028</b>
			(0.020)

<b>Constant</b>	<b>-1.867***</b>	<b>-3.083**</b>	<b>-2.413***</b>
	(0.711)	(1.455)	(0.800)
<b>Variance (constant)</b>	<b>0.60</b>	<b>0.37</b>	<b>0.47</b>
	(0.22)	(0.18)	(0.19)
<b>Variance (residual)</b>	<b>0.22</b>	<b>0.22</b>	<b>0.23</b>
	(0.12)	(0.11)	(0.11)
<b>Variance explained</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Inter-class correlation</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>0.62</b>	<b>0.67</b>
<b>Observations</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>169</b>
<b>AIC</b>	<b>278.5883</b>	<b>283.2911</b>	<b>276.8686</b>
<b>BIC</b>	<b>316.6341</b>	<b>321.3369</b>	<b>314.4274</b>
<b>Countries</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>

**Table 10:**  
Robustness checks  
for the analysis of  
debates at the  
county level  
excluding individual  
countries

Models 2-5:  
Multilevel models  
with random  
intercepts at the  
country and party  
level.

Model 1: Excluding  
Austria; Model 2:  
Excluding France;  
Model 3: Excluding  
Germany; Model 4:  
Excluding Ireland;  
Model 5: Excluding  
Spain; Model 6:  
Excluding UK

	Model1	Model2	Model3	Model4	Model5	Model6
<b>Internal Dissent</b>	<b>-1.063***</b>	<b>-1.045***</b>	<b>-0.881***</b>	<b>-0.944***</b>	<b>-1.023***</b>	<b>-1.025***</b>
	(0.191)	(0.123)	(0.0831)	(0.188)	(0.173)	(0.0979)
<b>Issue Entrepreneur Score</b>	<b>0.0867***</b>	<b>0.0823***</b>	<b>0.0609***</b>	<b>0.0752***</b>	<b>0.104***</b>	<b>0.120***</b>
	(0.0210)	(0.0221)	(0.0225)	(0.0112)	(0.0172)	(0.0210)
<b>Euroscepticism</b>	<b>2.789***</b>	<b>2.551***</b>	<b>2.368***</b>	<b>2.533</b>	<b>1.747**</b>	<b>3.144***</b>
<b>Formal Rights</b>	<b>-0.143**</b>	<b>-0.00228</b>	<b>0.270</b>	<b>-0.150</b>	<b>-0.224**</b>	<b>0.0143</b>
	(0.0659)	(0.147)	(0.444)	(0.130)	(0.110)	(0.184)
<b>Interaction Euroscepticism x Internal Dissent</b>	<b>-1.656***</b>	<b>-1.603***</b>	<b>-1.435***</b>	<b>-1.508**</b>	<b>-1.502***</b>	<b>-1.630***</b>
	(0.294)	(0.199)	(0.143)	(0.725)	(0.435)	(0.161)
<b>Interaction Euroscepticism x Issue Entrepreneur</b>	<b>0.168***</b>	<b>0.173***</b>	<b>0.145**</b>	<b>0.0956***</b>	<b>0.192**</b>	<b>0.230***</b>
	(0.0582)	(0.0509)	(0.0642)	(0.0272)	(0.0851)	(0.0614)
<b>Presidency</b>	<b>0.0442</b>	<b>0.0834</b>	<b>-0.0220</b>	<b>0.0310</b>	<b>0.0335</b>	<b>0.155</b>
	(0.147)	(0.145)	(0.110)	(0.144)	(0.158)	(0.100)
<b>Plenary</b>	<b>0.373</b>	<b>0.513</b>	<b>0.473</b>	<b>0.787**</b>	<b>0.818***</b>	<b>-0.0413</b>
	(0.448)	(0.397)	(0.441)	(0.362)	(0.273)	(0.287)
<b>Constant</b>	<b>-1.554*</b>	<b>-2.128***</b>	<b>-2.538**</b>	<b>-2.273**</b>	<b>-1.910***</b>	<b>-0.723</b>
	(0.903)	(0.787)	(1.180)	(0.924)	(0.554)	(0.530)

<b>Variance (constant)</b>	<b>0.639</b>	<b>0.491</b>	<b>0.648</b>	<b>0.476</b>	<b>0.234</b>	<b>0.195</b>
	(0.214)	(0.188)	(0.209)	(0.269)	(0.191)	(0.234)
<b>Variance (residual)</b>	<b>0.236</b>	<b>0.252</b>	<b>0.108</b>	<b>0.251</b>	<b>0.224</b>	<b>0.251</b>
	(0.126)	(0.127)	(0.029)	(0.128)	(0.139)	(0.142)
<b>Variance explained</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Inter-class correlation</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>0.65</b>	<b>0.51126</b>	<b>0.437</b>
<b>AIC</b>	<b>263.367</b>	<b>261.7582</b>	<b>136.4402</b>	<b>260.8245</b>	<b>235.3923</b>	<b>241.7836</b>
<b>BIC</b>	<b>299.9653</b>	<b>297.8055</b>	<b>171.9101</b>	<b>296.8719</b>	<b>271.1131</b>	<b>276.9973</b>
<b>Observations</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>Number of groups</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>

**Table 11:** Robustness checks for the analysis of debates at the party level.

*Model 1: OLS Regression*

*Model 2: Issue entrepreneur score > 1 (dummy)*

*Model 3: CHES EU position*

*Model 4: CMP EU position.*

*Model 5: Dummies for party family (CMP)*

*Models 2-5: Multilevel models with random intercepts at the country and party level.*

*Standard errors clustered at the country level. \*=significant at the 0.1 level, \*\* significant at the 0.05 level, \*\*\*=significant at the 0.01 level.*

	Model1	Model2	Model3	Model4	Model5
<b>ECO</b>					<b>0.371***</b>
					(0.120)
<b>COM</b>					<b>0.349*</b>
					(0.192)
<b>LIB</b>					<b>-0.050</b>
					(0.210)
<b>CHR</b>					<b>-0.058</b>
					(0.195)
<b>CON</b>					<b>-0.211</b>
					(0.162)
<b>NAT</b>					<b>0.239</b>
					(0.352)
<b>ETH</b>					<b>-0.056</b>
					(0.164)
<b>SIP</b>					<b>0.667***</b>
					(0.193)
<b>Internal Dissnet</b>	<b>0.128**</b>	<b>0.090**</b>	<b>0.109**</b>	<b>0.097**</b>	<b>0.107***</b>
	(0.039)	(0.035)	(0.043)	(0.045)	(0.027)
<b>Govt</b>	<b>0.033</b>	<b>0.017</b>	<b>0.023</b>	<b>0.066</b>	<b>0.131</b>
	(0.080)	(0.069)	(0.074)	(0.120)	(0.146)
<b>Left/Right (CHES)</b>	<b>0.020</b>	<b>0.014</b>	<b>0.017</b>		<b>0.058</b>
	(0.021)	(0.010)	(0.014)		(0.055)
<b>Euroscepticism</b>	<b>-0.277</b>	<b>-0.650</b>	<b>-0.723*</b>	<b>-0.637</b>	<b>-0.569</b>
	(0.463)	(0.433)	(0.400)	(0.444)	(0.437)

<b>Seatshare</b>	<b>-0.541</b>	<b>-0.051</b>	<b>-0.169</b>	<b>-0.070</b>	<b>0.060</b>
	(0.284)	(0.343)	(0.367)	(0.281)	(0.441)
<b>Issue Entrepreneur</b>	<b>0.018*</b>				
	(0.009)				
<b>Issuee Entrepreneur &gt; 1</b>		<b>0.158***</b>			
		(0.045)			
<b>EU Position CHES</b>			<b>-0.166***</b>		
			(0.049)		
<b>EU Position CMP</b>				<b>-0.022*</b>	
				(0.013)	
<b>Left/Right Position CMP</b>				<b>-0.003</b>	
				(0.005)	
<b>Constant</b>	<b>-2.716***</b>	<b>-2.479***</b>	<b>-2.835***</b>	<b>-3.286***</b>	<b>-1.676***</b>
	(0.304)	(0.147)	(0.193)	(0.256)	(0.333)
<b>Country:Variance (constant)</b>		<b>0.15</b>	<b>0.14</b>	<b>0.16</b>	<b>0.11</b>
		(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.08)
<b>Country: Varinace (residual)</b>		<b>2.37e-23</b>	<b>4.07e-23</b>	<b>5.19e-24</b>	<b>3.95e-26</b>
		(4.80e-21)	(6.55e-21)	(5.40e-23)	(9.79e-24)
<b>Party: Variance (residual)</b>		<b>0.17</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>0.16</b>	<b>0.16</b>
		(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.08)	(0.04)
<b>Variance explained</b>		<b>47%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>R-square</b>	<b>0.373</b>				
<b>Inter-class correlation (country)</b>		<b>0.47</b>	<b>0.47</b>	<b>0.48</b>	<b>0.42</b>
<b>Inter-class correlation (party)</b>		<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>AIC</b>	<b>177.2682</b>	<b>166.4222</b>	<b>166.329</b>	<b>167.8134</b>	<b>171.8981</b>
<b>BIC</b>	<b>191.1217</b>	<b>196.8998</b>	<b>196.8065</b>	<b>198.291</b>	<b>221.7704</b>
<b>Observations</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>Number of groups</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>

## **Paper 2: The Determinants of Resolutions of National Parliaments in EU Affairs**

### **Abstract**

Can national parliaments solve the accountability deficit in the European Union? Parliamentary resolutions can be regarded as the clearest embodiment of the control of government in EU affairs. This paper analyses the activity of national parliaments in EU affairs in the form of resolutions across five countries and the time period from the mid-1990s until the present. Formal scrutiny powers in EU affairs do not seem to have an impact on the frequency with which resolutions are issued. The activity of national parliaments in the form of resolutions is mostly driven by ‘issue entrepreneurs’, parties which portray the European Union in a negative light and which see it as a salient issue. Resolutions initiated by issue entrepreneurs are very critical of the government’s policy and of the European Union. Moreover, resolutions by issue entrepreneurs tend to have a longer preamble and a shorter operational part compared to resolutions by mainstream opposition and government parties, arguably indicating a more politicized stance and less focus on technical detail. By contrast, resolutions initiated by parliamentarians belonging to government parties are usually very supportive of the government and strengthen the latter’s position uncritically. The parliamentary activity brought about by government parties and issue entrepreneurs are thus both unlikely to lead to an increase in actual democratic control and accountability in EU affairs. While the former just uncritically support the government’s position, the latter frequently do not engage with the actual topic of the legal act at hand.

## **Introduction**

Can national parliaments solve the accountability deficit in the European Union? Parliamentary resolutions can be regarded as the clearest embodiment of the control of government in EU affairs. Complemented by the communication function in the form of debates, fulfilling the government control or scrutiny function (Norton, 1993) in the form of resolutions is the most important form of activity by which national parliaments could potentially help to increase democratic accountability in the European Union. In order to provide an accurate assessment of the extent to which national parliaments actually fulfil this function in practice, this paper analyses the determinants of activity of national parliaments in EU affairs in the form of resolutions. Resolutions can be seen as the most important expression of the government-related scrutiny function of national parliaments in EU affairs as they contain direct instructions for the government and evaluations of EU legal acts as well as the government's treatment thereof. Analysing the factors driving parliamentary activity in the form of resolutions on EU affairs is thus an important step in the evaluation of the overall activity and effectiveness of national parliamentary scrutiny in the European Union.

An interesting puzzle in this context is why the variation of activity in the form of resolutions does not seem to be related to the formal powers of national parliaments in EU Affairs. This raises the question as to how we can explain this variation. The paper seeks to analyse which factors influence the activity of national parliaments in EU affairs if not formal powers. The main ambition of this paper is thus to explain differences between parties and consequently parliaments in issuing resolutions in European Union affairs. Its argument is that the presence of issue entrepreneurs on Europe and their activity triggered by Eurosceptic public opinion are the most important



factors determining the activity of national parliaments in EU affairs. Formal powers are of secondary importance. This can explain the divergence between formal powers and actual activity. The assumption that an increase in these powers will make national parliaments more active in EU affairs and thus more effective in helping to increase democratic accountability in the European Union is thus highly questionable.

Previous studies on the role of national parliaments in European Union affairs have overwhelmingly focused on a ranking of the formal powers of national parliaments and their determinants (Karlas, 2011; Winzen, 2012, 2013). Very few studies have analysed resolutions among other forms of scrutiny activity (Auel, Rozenberg and Tacea, 2015). This paper focuses explicitly on parliamentary activity in the form of resolutions and draws upon a novel dataset in order to provide an original analysis at the disaggregate level of individual parties. Besides an analysis of the quantity of resolutions, the valence of the resolutions was evaluated. Thus, the paper seeks to find out whether the resolutions are critical or supportive of the government's position. For this purpose, resolutions for five countries (Austria, France, Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom) covering the time period from the late 1990s until the present were hand coded and then analysed quantitatively.

The analysis of this paper shows that there are marked between different types of resolutions. Governments are responsible for the majority of resolutions which are adopted by parliament. The resolutions of these parties are generally very supportive of the government's position and can thus not be regarded as critical scrutiny. By contrast issue entrepreneurs (Eurosceptic parties for which Europe is salient) are a driving force with regard to the activity of national parliaments in the form of motions, i.e. resolutions which were not agreed upon by parliaments. In particular, more motions are issued by issue entrepreneurs if the public is Eurosceptic. In other words, a more Eurosceptic

electorate empowers and enables the issue entrepreneurs to initiate more resolutions in EU affairs. The formal powers of parliaments only have a limited impact on the activity in the form of resolutions. This paper shows that motions initiated by issue entrepreneurs generally have longer preambles and shorter operational parts – arguably indicating that these parties pay more attention to general political points instead of technical scrutiny. This might indicate that a trade-off exists between activity, assertiveness and effectiveness with regard to the government control function of parliament in EU affairs.

The next section provides a definition of resolutions in parliamentary scrutiny of EU affairs and explains how resolutions are issued in the different scrutiny systems. The third section describes the chosen method and case selection. The fourth section presents the theoretical framework and the hypotheses tested in this paper. In the fifth section, the data and statistical models employed are described, while the sixth section contains the analysis. The final section discusses the results of the analysis and the implications for democratic accountability in the European Union.

### **Parliamentary Control of the Government and Resolutions as a Focus of Analysis**

In contrast to other parliamentary activities such as parliamentary questions or plenary debates, defining what constitutes a ‘resolution’ is not straightforward. There is considerable variation regarding this form of activity between parliaments with different parliamentary traditions and different scrutiny systems for European affairs. Black’s Law Dictionary defines a resolution as ‘The determination or decision, in regard to its opinion or intention, of a deliberative or legislative body (...)’ (Black’s Law Dictionary,

2014). Therefore, on the most basic level, a resolution is the formal expression of the opinion of parliament on a particular matter. For the present purpose, proposals for resolutions suggested by particular party groups will also be counted, even though they might not finally be agreed on by the committee or parliament as a whole: '[A resolutions is] [a]lso a motion or formal proposition offered for adoption by such a body' (ibid.). Resolutions can be binding or non-binding in character (ibid). Generally, resolutions are thus defined for the present purpose as relatively short written statements in which parliament, a committee or a party group expresses its opinion on an EU legal act (which may be both primary and secondary law, binding and non-binding) and/or the government's treatment thereof as well as suggestions for future treatment of the legal act.

The exact form a resolution takes (in terms of its length, level of detail, technicality, structure and the extent to which they are binding) differs significantly between parliaments. The extent to which they can be compared is therefore admittedly limited. However, despite these differences, resolutions in EU affairs are arguably functionally equivalent in the five countries analysed in this paper. They are the most direct and formal way in which parliament or a party group (or even a group of MPs) can express their opinion on an EU legal act and/or the government's treatment of and position on the latter. This form of activity can be contrasted with the less formal avenue of expression in parliamentary debates in the plenary, which is arguably first and foremost addressed to the citizens (Raunio, 2011, 306). Hence, parliamentary debates are the most important venue for parliaments to fulfil their communication function in EU affairs (p. 306). Resolutions are thus especially well-suited to analyse the extent of activity of national parliaments in EU affairs with regard to the scrutiny function as well as the extent to which parliaments generally support the government or are critical of its

actions. A comparison between different countries and parties can thus be useful to uncover different actors accounting for activity in issuing resolutions.

Resolutions on EU affairs can fulfil different functions and take on different formats depending on the formal scrutiny system of a parliament. A basic distinction has been made between so-called document-based and procedural models of national parliamentary scrutiny in EU affairs (COSAC, 2007). In practice, most parliaments employ a mix of both approaches to scrutiny (ibid.). In document-based systems, the appropriate committee(s) examines legislative proposals from European institutions and report their opinion to the chamber as a whole and to the government (COSAC, 2007, p. 8). Many of these systems have a ‘scrutiny reserve’, which means that the government cannot vote in the Council unless the parliament has agreed beforehand (ibid.). The extent to which the opinions of parliament are binding for the government varies (ibid.). The UK, France Germany and Spain are examples of these document-based systems (ibid.)

In procedural systems, the European Affairs Committee can in principle give a binding mandate to the government for negotiations in the Council (COSAC, 2007, p. 9). Of the countries analysed here, only Austria falls, in theory, in this category (p. 14). Other examples include famously the Danish *Folketinget* and the Finish Parliament (ibid.). However, arguably the distinction between these two categories is not crucial for the present purpose. Resolutions that vary in the extent to which they bind the government are issued in both types of systems. The quantity of resolutions as well as the extent to which they are critical of the government is also equally important in both types of systems. In both document based and procedural systems, only critical resolutions can induce the government to change its position.

A further distinction has to be made between centralized and decentralized scrutiny systems. In some countries, parliamentary scrutiny of EU affairs is concentrated in a European Affairs Committee (Austria, France, Spain and the United Kingdom in the present study). In other countries (Germany among the countries studied here) the sectoral committees in which a proposal falls are responsible for scrutiny, with the European Affairs Committee focusing on ‘horizontal’ and institutional questions. Indeed, an increasing number of countries seem to follow this approach, a phenomenon some authors have termed the ‘mainstreaming’ of EU affairs (Gattermann, Hoegenauer and Huff, 2013, p. 5). Arguably, this is the consequence of the increased breadth of competences and complexity of the EU and changes introduced in the Treaty of Lisbon (p. 10). There are thus some parliaments in which EU matters are centralized in the EAC, whereas in others they are decentralized in sectoral committees (Raunio and Wiberg, 2010, p. 79).

These institutional differences make comparisons between parliaments with different systems difficult. Thus, while in centralized systems only the activities of the EAC have to be collected, in decentralized systems also the EU-related activities of other committees have to be analysed. A potential difficulty would be to distinguish between the EU related and non-EU-related activities of these committees (Raunio and Wiberg, 2010, p. 87). However, the search functions and committee websites of the parliaments analysed here allow collecting the EU-related resolutions of the sectoral committees.

Which documents are counted as resolutions is an important decision which has to be the result of careful consideration. For the present purpose, only instruments which are potentially binding were included – for example motions on the floor of the House in the case of the House of Commons or ‘*Antrag auf Stellungnahme*’ in the German

Bundestag. Reports or similar but essentially non-binding documents, which can nevertheless express the opinion of a chamber of committee, such as various kinds of reports, were not included since their primary purpose is arguably not to support or expose the position of the government but rather to inform the public. Moreover, these types of instruments were not drafted by MPs, but often by the parliamentary research services and thus do not show a clear political perspective. Therefore, they relate *a priori* more the communication function than to the government control function of parliament and were thus excluded from the analysis. In addition, only such instruments which were voted on by the plenary were included, since only in these instances the whole impact of the political composition of the chamber and of internal dissent can be estimated. For example, in the case of the United Kingdom, only Motions on the Floor of the House are included, but not Early Day Motions or Scrutiny Reports by the European Affairs Committee. The different instruments classified as resolutions are summarized in Appendix 4.

## **Method and Case Selection**

Three properties of parliamentary resolutions in EU affairs are analysed in this paper. As a first step, the quantity of resolutions is examined i.e. the number of resolutions according to the above definition in a given month. This number allows comparisons of the overall activity of the parliament in EU affairs in the form of resolutions, changes over time and differences between different party groups (especially between issue entrepreneurs and mainstream parties) in issuing resolutions.

As a second step, the content or ‘quality’ of resolutions is analysed. More specifically, the extent to which the resolutions are critical or supportive of the government is investigated. A critical resolution by the opposition or even a government party can be more appropriately considered as ‘real’ scrutiny or government control, whereas resolutions which just support or endorse the position of the government might not justifiably qualify as such. The analysis of the valence of resolutions can thus give a valuable assessment of the extent to which the results of the assessment of the sheer number of resolutions are a realistic indicator of parliament fulfilling its role with regard to the scrutiny function in EU affairs. Resolutions were coded on a Lickert-type scale from -2 (very critical) to 2 (critical). The full coding scheme can be found in Appendix 5. To safeguard the reliability of the findings, a subset of resolutions was recoded for their valence by a second coder.<sup>6</sup> Since the resolutions are generally short (often around 250 words) and use a rather formal language, using automated procedures such as Wordscores or Wordfish would be difficult (Klemmensen et al., 2007, p. 750, Hjorth, Klemmensen, Hobolt, et al. 2015, p. 1). Moreover, the relevant dimension (support or criticism) would not be clear enough to use automated methods (Proksch and Slapin, 2014, p. 132). The application of automated text analysis to parliamentary oversights is thus rather difficult (Proksch and Slapin, 2014, p. 134). The use of a traditional sentiment analysis dictionary would also be questionable for linguistic reasons – comparable content sentiment dictionaries for all languages covered in this project are not available.

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<sup>6</sup> A subset of 150 resolutions – around a third of the total of resolutions used in the valence analysis – were re-coded by a second coder who is an expert in EU politics. Krippendorff’s Alpha was calculated, a coefficient of inter-coder reliability (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 221). It expresses how much better the agreement between the two coders is than what could be expected by chance (p. 222). When a five category Lickert-type scale from, -2 to 2 is used, the Krippendorff’s Alpha is 0.687, which is above the required threshold of 0.667 (p. 242). When the scale is collapsed to three categories from -1 to 1, Krippendorff’s Alpha reaches 0.910.

As a third step, and following an approach by Huber and Shipan, the length of a document is used as a proxy for how detailed the mandate is for the government is (2002, p. 73). Huber and Shipan use the length of a law as a proxy for its complexity and for the discretion it grants to the bureaucracy (Ehrlich, 2011, p. 170). They distinguish between parts that contain procedural or general language and policy words (Huber and Shipan, 2002, p. 69). The general assumption is that longer laws contain more detail which can limit and constrains the room for interpretation of the bureaucratic agent (Ehrlich, 2011, p. 170.). In EU affairs, the difference between the length of the preamble of a resolution and its operational or ‘policy’ part is important. In general, a preamble can be defined as ‘The introductory part of a statute or deed, stating its purpose, aims, and justification’ (Oxford Dictionary, 2015). Preambles are often filled with ‘general’ language.

In EU affairs, preambles often relate to general points parties would like to make about the importance of the legal act for European integration or the European Unions as such. Especially motions initiated by issue entrepreneurs tend to have longer preambles and shorter operational parts since they do not focus on technical scrutiny but rather on simple messages which are related to general points on European integration. Comparing the ratio of the preamble to the operational part of the resolutions thus allows to assess the extent to which the resolutions by the different party groups are detailed and can thus be considered ‘effective’ or ‘serious’ scrutiny, much in the same way that Huber and Shipan use the length of a legal act and the share of procedural language as a measure for bureaucratic constrain (Huber and Shipan, 2002, p. 73). Resolutions and statutes are quite similar in that they are both instruments in which a legislature stipulates suggestions for actions by an agent (the bureaucracy in the case of statutes and the government in the case of resolutions. It thus seems reasonable to use



and approach that compares general language in the preamble with the policy language in the operational part as a proxy for the technicality of targeted ‘depth’ of a resolution. The fact that Huber and Shipan also analyse a number of European legislatures (for example Finland, Italy and Germany) suggest that their approach can also be adapted to parliamentary systems (p. 27). Example of the structure of resolutions of issue entrepreneurs and mainstream parties can be found in Appendix 6.

Natural languages differ from each other in many aspects, not least in their efficiency (Hawkins, 2014). For example, if an English text is translated to Spanish or German, the translated text is around 40% and 30% longer respectively than the original (The Economist, 2012). Moreover, national legal traditions are characterised by different degrees of verbosity (Lundmark, 2001). To compare the absolute length of texts in different languages, Huber and Shipan use a ‘verbosity multiplier’ to account for these inherent differences (Huber and Shipan, 2002, p. 178). They compare the length of an EU legal act across different languages and use the relative length of the different versions to determine the ‘efficiency’ of a language, based on the number of characters used (ibid.). This approach is necessary for the work of Huber and Shipan as they compare the *absolute length* of the preambles of legal acts as a proxy for bureaucratic discretion. However, the present thesis uses the relative length of the preamble and the operational part as a proxy for politicization for theoretical reasons – the relative length of the two parts arguable sheds light on the aspect the party group aims to emphasize in their resolutions. Given that the *ratio* of the preamble and the operational part of the resolution is used as a proxy for politicization, and thus the *relative length* (not the absolute length), the use of a verbosity multiplier is not necessary here. The relative length should take the verbosity or efficiency of the languages into account and makes comparisons possible.

The following countries were chosen as country cases for the analysis: Austria, Germany, France, Spain and the UK. The ten ‘new’ member states which joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 were excluded because of the historical perspective of the study. Given the timeframe of the study from the mid/late 1990s to the present, the short length of membership of the new member states would make a meaningful comparison across time impossible. Moreover, the countries were chosen because they represent an excellent institutional spread and the highest possible variation regarding the<sup>†</sup> independent variables of the study. The aim was thus to select a diverse set of cases (Gerring, 2000, p. 97). As a consequence, the analysis includes countries with a very Eurosceptic electorate, such as Austria and the UK, as well as countries with generally more pro-European voters such as Germany. Moreover, countries with strong formal scrutiny powers, such as Austria, and those with rather weak formal scrutiny powers, such as Spain are included. There is also strong variation regarding the average dissent within parties on European integration, with Austria and Germany showing very low values and the UK showing very high values. The same holds true for the presence of Euroscepticism in the party system and the salience of the EU, as expressed by the issue entrepreneurship score.

## **Theory and Hypotheses**

Previous studies have often seen the formal powers of national parliaments in EU affairs in the form of resolutions as important determinants of their activity (Auel, Rozenberg and Tacea, 2015, p. 296). The general expectation is thus that stronger formal powers will lead to more activity of national parliaments in EU affairs. This was

also the hope of politicians across the EU who pushed to increase the formal powers of national parliaments at both at the national and the European level (e.g. Herzog and Gerken, 2007; House of Lords, 2014). However, this paper argues that formal powers are not the most important determinants of parliamentary activity in the form of resolutions. Instead, the presence of issue entrepreneurs –parties for which Europe is salient and which are critical of it- and their interaction with public Euroscepticism are the most important factors. This fact can also explain why we observe divergence between formal powers in EU affairs and actual activity in the form of resolutions- there are ‘strong’ parliaments which are not very active and ‘weak’ parliaments which are very active in issuing resolutions. Parliaments with a strong presence of issue entrepreneurs tend to be very active, irrespective of their formal powers.

Issue entrepreneurship is defined as ‘a political strategy with which parties mobilize new policy issues that have been largely ignored by the political mainstream and adopt a position on the issue that is substantially different from the current position of the mainstream’ (Hobolt and De Vries, 2015, p. 3). Issue entrepreneurs have thus a larger ‘framing distance’ towards all other parties compared to mainstream parties (Van der Wardt, 2015, p. 841). Parties at the losing end of the political process are likely to introduce and champion new issues to change the dynamics of competition in the political system (Carmines and Stimson, 1993). Generally, elites tend to be more pro-European than citizens (Hooghe, 2003, p. 296). Parties that adopt a strategy as issue entrepreneurs tend to be coherent on the issue on which they mobilize (Hobolt and De Vries, 2015, p. 19). Arguably, issue entrepreneur parties have a strong interest in being perceived as active on Europe (Auel and Raunio, 2014b, p. 16; De Vries and Edwards, 2009). They are likely to use all parliamentary instruments at their disposal - debates, parliamentary questions and resolutions - to draw attention to their activity in European

Union affairs. In the case of resolutions, the chances of their proposals being accepted by parliament are very low since they are opposition parties without a realistic prospect of joining the government in the overwhelming majority of cases (Hobolt and De Vries, 2015, p. 3). Therefore, the objective of their resolutions is arguably not to influence the government's position and thus indirectly policy at the European level. Rather, issue entrepreneurs aim to draw attention to their particular position on a topic related to European Affairs and to expose – from their perspective – controversial or unpopular positions of the government on the matter. As a consequence, they are likely to use Europe as a 'wedge issue' (Van de Wardt, De Vries and Hobolt, 2014, p. 986). If issue entrepreneurs are more active on the issue of Europe, voters might come to regard them as more competent on the issue (Budge, 2015, p. 767). Their resolutions are thus likely to be numerous, but lacking technical detail and focus. The activities of issue entrepreneurs can thus not be regarded as substantive scrutiny, but rather as an effort to gain public support in ideological debates over Europe.

Parties which adopt an issue entrepreneur strategy have a lot of electoral benefit from being perceived as active in EU affairs but face very little cost, as explained above. For them, there would be higher benefits from scrutiny activity relative to costs. If parties do not care deeply about Europe or are generally accommodating of it, but are faced with a Eurosceptic electorate, MPs might not want to be perceived as active in EU affairs by issuing resolutions. This is because they face potentially high costs by investing time and resources in an issue on which they diverge from their voters. It is thus hypothesized that parties which are issue entrepreneurs initiate more motions/resolutions on Europe. However, given that they are opposition parties, these motions are likely to be mostly unsuccessful. Given their negative position on the EU, their resolutions are also likely to be very critical. By contrast, government and parties

for which Europe is not salient are likely to have relatively little to gain from investing time and resources in European affairs with regard to electoral benefits. When they do issue resolutions, their main purpose might be to show support for the government and to strengthen its negotiation position at the European level. However, these resolutions are generally likely to be approved by parliament. Again, the main purpose of their resolutions might not be scrutiny in the classical sense of the term, but rather strategic support for the government. This leads to the following hypotheses:

**H1a:** Parties which are issue entrepreneurs issue more resolutions on Europe than mainstream parties.

**H1b:** The resolutions initiated by issue entrepreneurs are on average more critical than the resolutions of mainstream parties.

Arguably, the fact that parties for which Europe is salient and which have a negative opinion on it –issue entrepreneurs- are the drivers of activity in European Union affairs might appear not surprising or even tautological. However, besides showing quantitatively that this is actually the case the contribution of this paper lies in analysing the particular interplay between public opinion and the presence of issue entrepreneur parties in bringing about activity. The presence of issue entrepreneurs is thus a necessary, but not a sufficient condition in bringing about activity in the form of resolutions in EU affairs. The presence of public Euroscepticism also plays an important role. The underlying rationale is that parliaments in countries with a Eurosceptic electorate might be more inclined to be active in scrutinising the government. Eurosceptic voters expect their agents to be more assertive on EU affairs. By contrast,

when there is a permissive consensus in favour of the EU, MPs might have fewer incentives to invest their time and resources in scrutiny (Bergman, 1997). Arguably, this might also hold true for the number of resolutions issued per month. Moreover, it can be hypothesized the resolutions tend to be more critical if the public is Eurosceptic.

Public Euroscepticism is likely to influence the activity of both issue entrepreneurs and government parties. Research has demonstrated that parties' positions on EU affairs are relevant for the choices of voters – there is thus 'issue voting' with regard to EU affairs even though it is conditional on the salience of the topic and the structure of partisan conflict (De Vries, 2007, p. 379). Governments thus react to public opinion both in the form of promises and actions (Hobolt and Klemmensen, 2012, p. 323). With respect to European integration, research has shown that parties are responsive to the electorate's position on the EU, albeit in a way which is moderated by the institutional context (Steenbergen, Edwards and De Vries, 2007; Arnold, Sapir and De Vries, 2012). In particular, parties respond to public Euroscepticism by including more Eurosceptic statements in their party manifestos (Williams and Spoon, 2015, p. 185). It is thus reasonable to expect that this effect can also be observed with regard to actual activity of parties in affairs in the form of resolutions. When public Euroscepticism is strong, issue entrepreneurs are likely to become more active in EU affairs and initiate motions more frequently in order to show the electorate that they are in line with their more Eurosceptic preferences. On the other hand, government and mainstream parties are likely to issue fewer resolutions when faced with public Euroscepticism, since they want to avoid the distance between them and their voters on European Affairs from becoming apparent. It is thus the interplay of the presence of issue entrepreneurs as a necessary condition and their interaction with Eurosceptic public opinion as the sufficient condition by bringing about parliamentary activity in

EU affairs in the form of resolutions. The presence of issue entrepreneurs in a political system represents a potential for activity in the parliamentary scrutiny of EU affairs which has to be activated by Eurosceptic public opinion.

**H2a:** Parties issue more critical resolutions if the public is Eurosceptic.

**H2b:** Issue entrepreneurs initiate more resolutions on EU affairs if the public is Eurosceptic while mainstream parties issue fewer resolutions.

All in all, government parties and issue entrepreneurs are thus likely to initiate resolutions for very different reasons and purposes. However, both have in common that they do not use resolutions for the purpose of actual scrutiny, i.e. to influence the government's position on a European Union legislative proposal, but to criticize the government and the EU on a general level to gain votes and to support the government in negotiations at the European level respectively. Both forms of activity are thus not in line with what was arguably supposed to be the role of national parliaments in EU affairs and the rationale to strengthen their formal scrutiny powers. With regard to the content of resolutions, it can be argued that issue entrepreneurs will focus more on general criticism of the European Union instead of actual scrutiny in the form of detailed policy suggestions. This measure was inspired by the work of Huber and Shipan who use the relative length of legal documents as a proxy for the level of discretion a bureaucratic agent has in the implementation of legislation (Huber and Shipan, 2002, p. 73). As a proxy for the relationship between general statements and actual policy prescriptions, the ratio between the preamble and the operational part of resolutions is employed, as explained above. Thus,

**H3:** Resolutions initiated by issue entrepreneurs will have a lower ratio of the operational part to the preamble.

The literature on national parliaments has recognized that formal scrutiny powers do not necessarily mirror their actual activity in EU affairs (Auel and Benz, 2005; Pollack and Smolinski, 2003; Sprungk, 2007). Formal scrutiny powers mostly concern the extent to which parliament receives information on EU affairs and the extent to which it can issue binding mandates to the government (Winzen, 2012, p.660). Formal rights will thus be included as a control variable in the analysis. Moreover, the extent to which Europe is topical in a particular country at a given point in time might have an impact on the extent to which motions and resolutions on Europe are issued. This might for example be the case when a country holds the Council Presidency, which is also included as a control variable. In addition, the left/right position of the parties is included as control variable, as well as the government/opposition status of individual parties. Finally, when MPs as agents of the voters and principals of the government have diverging preferences; intra-party dissent is the result of a conflict between the interests of the MPs principals, voters and the party leadership, according to Competing Principals Theory (CPT) (Carey, 2007, Sieberer, 2013). It is in the interest of parties, or more precisely, the party leadership, to present a coherent position to the electorate (Auel and Raunio, 2014b, p. 16). If parties are divided over Europe, the MPs are likely to be more reluctant to be active scrutinisers. Parties might want to prevent these divisions from becoming apparent, since their position on the EU has a significant effect on the propensity of voters to vote for them, as De Vries and Tillman have shown (2011, p. 10). Whether to be active then becomes a question of whether the rewards of being perceived as active outweigh the costs of presenting an incoherent party image. It



is thus expected that parties which are internally divided issue fewer resolutions on Europe per month and hence party cohesion is included as another control variable.

## **Data and Model**

All in all, 3466 resolutions were collected covering the time period from the mid/late 1990s until 2012, even though for Spain and the United Kingdom data for the entire time period are not available or could not be coded for reasons of feasibility (see Appendix 4 for an overview of the time periods covered for each country). For the analysis, the resolutions are aggregated by month. Descriptive statistics can be found in Appendix 7. Given the distribution of the number of resolutions which follows a negative binominal distribution, a multilevel count model was applied to assess the overall number of resolutions by month (Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal, 2012, p. 696) (Models 1-3). A negative binominal model was chosen over a poisson model since the overall variance of the resolutions is significantly larger than their mean (Hilbe, 2011, p. 239). In order to analyse the overall valence of the resolutions issued by a parliament in a given month, all resolutions were hand coded for their valence on a Likert-type scale from -2 to 2. The mean of the valence scores for all resolutions issued was used as the dependent variable for a multilevel linear regression (Model 4-6). In Model 7, the ratio of the length of the preamble of a resolution and its operational part is specified as the dependent variable for a multilevel linear regression. In this model, the individual resolutions serve as observations. To account for autocorrelation, a lagged dependent variable was included (Becks and Katz, 1995). All models include random intercepts for the different countries and party groups.

As predictor variables, the issue entrepreneur score of the parliament was included, operationalized as the difference between the mean party position on Europe of all parties in parliament and the party position of each respective party, multiplied by the salience score of each party (Hobolt and De Vries, 2012, p. 256). This position and salience scores are taken from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES, 2014). Popular Euroscepticism is operationalized as the number of respondents stating that membership of their country to the European Union was a ‘good thing’ minus those stating that it was ‘a bad thing’ in the Eurobarometer survey (Eurobarometer, 2012a). As control variables, the mean left/right position for all parties represented in parliament was included, also based on the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES, 2014). Moreover, the strength of formal scrutiny powers based on Winzen (2012) and whether a country held the Council presidency in a given month were included. Data on the composition of parliament and the seat share of the respective parties were derived from the ParlGov database (Doering and Manow, 2012). The seat share of a party was included as a proxy for the resources they can apply to drafting and issuing resolutions (Caulier and Dumont, 2010, p. 48). Missing values were filled in using linear interpolation. As a robustness check, the model was also run without interpolation, yielding very similar results. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 11 below. The robustness checks can be found in Appendix 8.

**Table 12:** Results of the statistical analysis of resolutions

Model 1: All resolutions (count),  
Model 2: successful resolutions (count),  
Model 3: Unsuccessful resolutions (count),  
Model 4: All resolutions (valence), Model 5: successful resolutions (valence), Model 6: unsuccessful resolutions (valence), Model 7: Ratio unsuccessful resolutions

	Model1	Model2	Model3	Model4	Model5	Model6	Model 7
<b>Issue Entrepreneur</b>	<b>0.086***</b>	<b>0.022</b>	<b>0.103***</b>	<b>-0.060***</b>	<b>-0.013</b>	<b>-0.030***</b>	<b>-0.021*</b>
	(0.019)	(0.063)	(0.021)	(0.018)	(0.041)	(0.011)	(0.011)
<b>Internal Dissent</b>	<b>0.042</b>	<b>-0.108</b>	<b>0.008</b>	<b>-0.093**</b>	<b>0.012</b>	<b>-0.062*</b>	<b>0.000</b>
	(0.069)	(0.141)	(0.083)	(0.040)	(0.059)	(0.034)	(0.024)
<b>Left/Right Position</b>	<b>-0.023</b>	<b>0.033</b>	<b>-0.018</b>	<b>-0.008</b>	<b>0.003</b>	<b>-0.012</b>	<b>-0.037***</b>
	(0.017)	(0.040)	(0.019)	(0.023)	(0.037)	(0.013)	(0.024)
<b>Formal Rights</b>	<b>0.294</b>	<b>0.542</b>	<b>0.086</b>	<b>0.333**</b>	<b>2.228***</b>	<b>0.192</b>	<b>0.096</b>
	(0.335)	(0.426)	(0.382)	(0.167)	(0.369)	(0.161)	(0.089)
<b>Government</b>	<b>-0.301***</b>	<b>1.093***</b>	<b>-1.408***</b>	<b>1.362***</b>	<b>-0.032</b>	<b>0.523***</b>	<b>0.000</b>
	(0.096)	(0.185)	(0.124)	(0.142)	(0.219)	(0.130)	(0.112)
<b>Presidency</b>	<b>0.078</b>	<b>-0.346</b>	<b>0.194</b>	<b>-0.191</b>	<b>1.195***</b>	<b>-0.067</b>	<b>0.136</b>
	(0.145)	(0.261)	(0.165)	(0.162)	(0.456)	(0.111)	(0.094)
<b>Euroscepticism</b>	<b>-1.222***</b>	<b>-1.249</b>	<b>-0.212</b>	<b>0.325</b>	<b>0.209</b>	<b>0.100</b>	<b>0.119</b>
	(0.764)	(1.469)	(0.885)	(0.348)	(0.637)	(0.270)	(0.222)
<b>Euroscepticism x Issue Ent.</b>	<b>0.518***</b>	<b>0.279</b>	<b>0.598***</b>				
	(0.088)	(0.255)	(0.097)				
<b>Euroscepticism x Int. Diss.</b>	<b>0.175</b>	<b>0.363</b>	<b>-0.286</b>				
	(0.193)	(0.357)	(0.229)				
<b>Seat Share</b>	<b>-0.808**</b>	<b>2.252**</b>	<b>-0.899**</b>	<b>0.461</b>	<b>0.515</b>	<b>0.246</b>	<b>0.024</b>
	(0.356)	(0.945)	(0.428)	(0.479)	(0.507)	(0.332)	(0.182)
<b>Constant</b>	<b>-3.951***</b>	<b>-8.851***</b>	<b>-3.559***</b>	<b>-0.813</b>	<b>-2.570***</b>	<b>-0.527</b>	<b>0.295</b>
	(0.687)	(1.080)	(0.787)	(0.594)	(0.985)	(0.454)	(0.357)
<b>Variance (Country)</b>	<b>3.282</b>		<b>36.78</b>	<b>6.75e-22</b>	<b>2.72e-18</b>	<b>6.11e-19</b>	<b>1.72e-09</b>
	(3.453)		(37.76)	(1.57e-20)	(3.08e-17)	(1.83e-17)	(1.69e-08)
<b>Variance (Party Group)</b>	<b>3.790</b>	<b>1.057**</b>	<b>2.540</b>	<b>0.008</b>	<b>0.116</b>	<b>3.02e-19</b>	<b>0.08</b>
	(2.032)	(0.451)	(2.243)	(0.013)	(0.156)	(3.99e-18)	(0.051)

<b>Variance (Residual)</b>				<b>0.644</b>	<b>0.256</b>	<b>0.253</b>	<b>0.724</b>
				(0.045)	(0.033)	(0.031)	(0.017)
<b>Variance explained</b>				<b>46%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>Inter-class correlation (country)</b>				0.00	0.31	0.00	0.00
<b>Inter –class correlation (party family)</b>				0.01	0.00	0.00	0.14
<b>AIC</b>	<b>5940.008</b>	<b>3101.564</b>	<b>3934.11</b>	<b>1044.56</b>	<b>234.3758</b>	<b>390.1563</b>	<b>1951.486</b>
<b>BIC</b>	<b>6037.532</b>	<b>3192.993</b>	<b>4031.635</b>	<b>1101.191</b>	<b>274.735</b>	<b>439.2878</b>	<b>2018.293</b>
<b>Observations</b>	<b>3,244</b>	<b>3,244</b>	<b>3,244</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>873</b>
<b>Parties</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Countries</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>

..

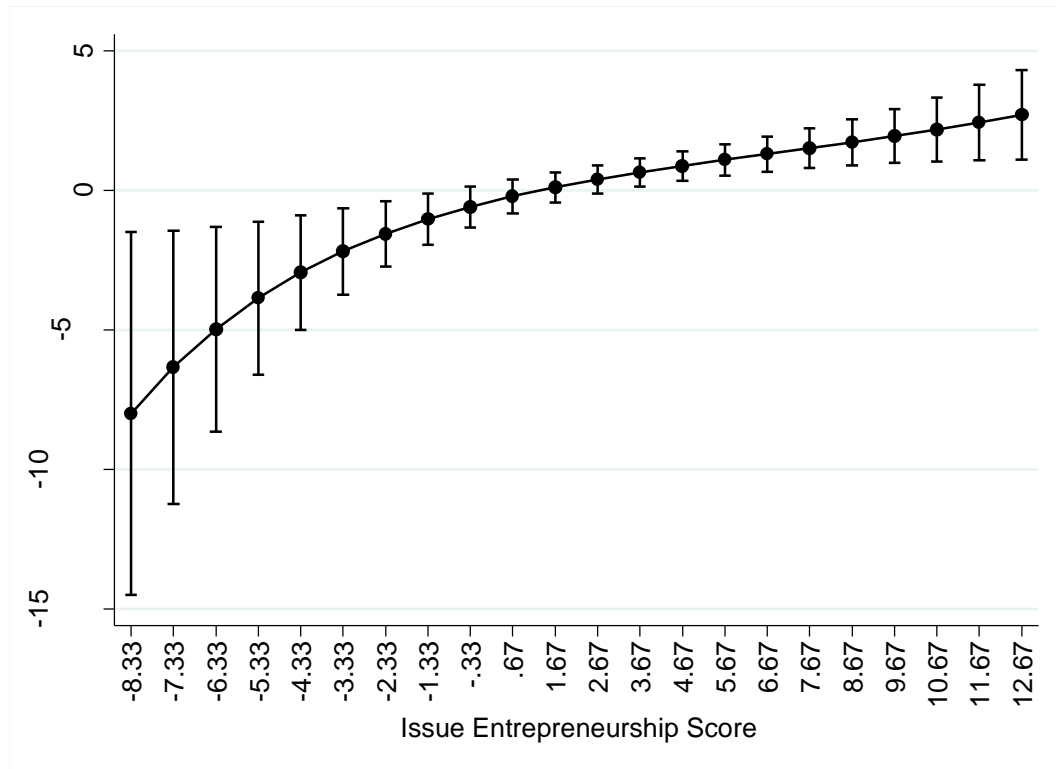
## Analysis and Results

As the results of Model 1 show, issue entrepreneurs are indeed prone to more activity in the form of resolutions. The coefficient for the effect of issue entrepreneurship score on the number of resolutions is significant and in the expected direction (0.10), confirming Hypothesis 1a. As expected, stronger formal powers do not seem to have an effect on parliamentary activity in the form of resolutions. No significant effect for the impact of internal dissent on the overall number of resolutions could be found

An interesting interaction effect with the issue entrepreneurship score of a party and public Euroscepticism can be observed, confirming Hypothesis 2b. When the issue entrepreneurship score of a party is high, Euroscepticism seems to have an increasingly positive effect on the number of resolutions, i.e. the higher the issue entrepreneur score of a party, the more resolutions will be issued when the public is Eurosceptic. As shown in Figure 4, for parties with a low issue entrepreneurship score (i.e. parties which are pro-European and for which the EU is not a salient topic) an increase in public Euroscepticism leads to fewer motions on EU affairs being issued. For example, for a mainstream party such as the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), a two standard deviation increase in public Euroscepticism leads to about one resolutions less being issued per month. By contrast, for a party with a high issue entrepreneurship score, an increase in public Euroscepticism leads to more resolutions. Thus, the Eurosceptic Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) would initiate around one additional resolution for a two standard deviation increase in public Euroscepticism.

MPs might want to signal to their Eurosceptic voters that they take the task of scrutinising the government on EU affairs seriously. By contrast, parties with a low issue entrepreneurship score issue fewer resolutions when confronted with public Euroscepticism. Government participation seems to have a slight negative effect as does the seat share of a party. Figure 4 also shows that the negative effect for mainstream parties is much stronger than the positive effect (in the sense of more resolutions are issued) for issue entrepreneurs. As mentioned above, pro-European parties with a low issue-entrepreneurship score which display a negative effect here are mostly larger mainstream and government parties which are often larger in size than issue entrepreneurs. Previous research has found that government and mainstream parties are generally more sensitive to changes in public opinion than smaller and more specialised parties (Williams and Spoon, 2015, p. 185). This might explain why the negative effect for mainstream parties is stronger than the positive effect for issue entrepreneurs.

**Figure 4:** *Effect of the issue entrepreneurship score of a party on the effect of popular Euroscepticism on the number of resolutions per month.*



*The figure shows 95% confidence intervals (higher values indicate more Euroscepticism and more salience attributed to EU affairs).*

As explained above, it is important to distinguish between those resolutions which were actually agreed on by parliament and those which were initiated by a party group but not actually adopted (referred to as ‘motions’ here). Thus, Models 2 and 3 analyse successful and unsuccessful resolutions respectively. When only analysing the resolutions which parliament agreed on, the issue entrepreneurship score of a party does not seem to have an effect (Model 2). By contrast, the government status of a party seems to have a significant and positive effect on the number of resolutions, as does their share of seats in the legislature. It thus becomes clear that for the number of resolutions which were actually agreed on by parliament, the government status of a party and its seat share in the legislature are the most important determinants. A very different picture emerges when only analysing the resolutions which were not

successful in the legislature ('motions'). As Model 3 shows, the coefficient for the issue entrepreneurship score is significant (0.10) and positive at the 0.01 level. The effect for government participation and seat share is negative. Again, an interesting interaction effect with public Euroscepticism can be observed, confirming Hypothesis 2b. The analysis thus shows that the successful resolutions are overwhelmingly initiated by government parties, while unsuccessful motions are usually initiated by issue entrepreneurs.

In Models 4-6 the valence of resolutions in EU affairs was analysed. As Model 4 shows, the average monthly valence of all resolutions issued by a party in a given month decreases by -0.06 for a one-unit increase on the issue entrepreneurship score. Resolutions initiated by issue entrepreneurs are thus more critical than those initiated by pro-European parties, confirming Hypotheses 1b. Not surprisingly, government participation has the opposite effect. On average, the average monthly valence of all resolutions initiated by a governing party in a given month is by 1.38 higher than for an opposition party. If parties are divided, they issue more critical resolutions. There are however important differences between successful resolutions and unsuccessful motions. For successful resolutions (Model 5), no significant effect for the issue entrepreneurship score of a party could be found. Moreover, the formal powers of a parliament seem to play a role in influencing the valence of successful resolutions. Surprisingly, parties in national parliaments with stronger formal powers tend to issue resolutions which are more supportive of the government (a one unit increase on the scale of the formal powers of parliament leads to a 2.17 point increase in the average valence of resolutions). This indicates the parliaments with strong formal powers are on average less critical, not more. It is interesting to note that successful motions are



significantly more positive if a country has the Council Presidency. For unsuccessful resolutions ('motions'), the issue entrepreneurship score of a party has a small but significant impact on the average monthly valence: a unit increase on the issue entrepreneurship score lowers the monthly average by 0.02 points. Even for unsuccessful motions, there is still a significant effect for government participation, but it is markedly smaller: the average monthly valence of all unsuccessful motions initiated by government parties is 0.4 higher than for opposition parties (Model 6). Public Euroscepticism does not have an impact on the valence of resolutions, disconfirming Hypothesis 2a.

Finally, it was analysed to what extent the ratio of the preamble to the main operational part of a resolution or motion differs between parties (Model 7). As explained in more detail above, issue entrepreneurs initiate resolutions with longer preambles and shorter operational parts – arguably as a sign that they bring up more general, politicized points which are usually placed in the preamble and care less about actual 'technical' scrutiny which takes place in the operational part. A one unit increase in the issue entrepreneurship score leads the ratio of preamble and operational part to be smaller by 2%. This result of the statistical analysis could also be confirmed when hand coding and reading the resolutions which contain both a preamble and an operational part. Examples of resolutions by mainstream parties and issue entrepreneurs can be found in Appendix 6. The fact that Eurosceptic parties are the drivers of parliamentary activity in the form of resolutions but simultaneously tend to focus on politicized points might make it questionable to what extent activity can actually be equated with effectiveness in this regard.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

In affecting the levels of parliamentary control of the government on EU affairs, as measured by resolutions, this paper suggests that the presence of issue entrepreneurs and generally the position of parties on European integration play a very important role in determining parliamentary activity. However, there is a significant difference between resolutions which were agreed upon by parliament and those which were not. The successful resolutions are initiated by large government parties in the vast majority of cases. These resolutions generally support the position of the government and can thus not be regarded as scrutiny as such.

In contrast, when separately analysing the resolutions which failed to reach a majority in parliament, it became clear that issue entrepreneur parties are overwhelmingly responsible for these motions. An observed increase in the activity of national parliaments in EU affairs might thus be the consequence of an increase in the strength of Eurosceptic tendencies. Issue entrepreneurs generally very critical of the government's position. Moreover, interaction effects between the presence of issue entrepreneurs and public Euroscepticism can be observed. When issue entrepreneurs are present, public Euroscepticism leads to more resolutions being issued by parliament as a whole. This implies that in addition to their presence in the plenary and in committees, public opinion in the form of Euroscepticism has an enabling effect on the activity of issue entrepreneurs in EU affairs. Their increased activity might be a consequence of issue entrepreneurs wanting to signal to their voters that they take their role as scrutinizers seriously, whereas pro-European parties do not want to antagonize their voters.

Arguably, this could be interpreted as mirroring an increase in Eurosceptic views on behalf of the electorate. In that sense, the presence of issue entrepreneurs contributes to Europe being put on the agenda. It can be argued that this has a normatively positive effect in terms of parliaments as a whole fulfilling its communication function with regard to EU affairs. However, an increase of public Euroscepticism does not lead to more critical resolutions, indicating that party political factors are more important than responsiveness with regard to resolutions, potentially because they are less publicly visible. Moreover, as both a quantitative and a qualitative analysis of the structure and content of the resolutions shows, motions initiated by issue entrepreneurs are mostly concerned with general, politicized Eurosceptic statements. The operational part of the motions and resolutions is generally short and contains little detail. Therefore, it might be argued that there is little substantive scrutiny, i.e. parliaments might fail to make an impact on the ‘bread and butter’ issues of EU politics on which they actually could have an impact. There is thus less positive evidence of national parliaments adequately fulfilling their government control function in EU affairs from a normative perspective.

Interestingly, formal powers of national parliaments do not seem to have an impact on the quantity of resolutions issued. However, the formal powers of national parliaments do seem to have an impact on the valence of resolutions. When only analysing successful resolutions, formal rights seem to lead to more positive, i.e. less critical resolutions, arguably the opposite of what was intended by the introduction of stronger formal scrutiny powers. This impact of formal powers on democratic accountability can thus be seen critically from a normative point of view. Thus, formal powers might not necessarily lead to more activity, and activity might not lead to more

effectiveness if it is not concerned with actual scrutiny but uncritical and ‘blind’ support by government parties or political ‘smoke and mirrors’ on behalf of issue entrepreneurs. As a consequence, the hopes that national parliaments could help overcome the democratic deficit of the European Union might prove to be unfounded.

## Appendix 4: Resolutions in the five countries

*Table 13: The committees covered, legal acts counted as resolutions and the time frame of the analysis for the different countries.*

Parliament	Committee	Resolution	Time Period
<b>Austrian Nationalrat</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hauptausschuss</li> <li>• Unterausschuss in Angelegenheiten der EU</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stellungnahme</li> <li>• Antrag auf Stellungnahme</li> </ul>	1996-2012
<b>German Bundestag</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decentralized</li> <li>• Ausschuss fuer Angelegenheiten der Europaeischen Union</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beschlussempfehlung und Bericht</li> <li>• Antrag</li> </ul>	1996-2012
<b>French Assemblée Nationale</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission des affaires européennes (from July 2008)</li> <li>• Délégation de l'Assemblée nationale pour l'Union européenne (until July 2008)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Résolutions adoptées</li> <li>• Propositions de résolution sur des projets de directives et divers textes européens</li> <li>• Propositions de résolution sur des projets de directives et divers textes européens déposées par les députés</li> <li>• Conclusions adoptées par la Commission des affaires européennes</li> </ul>	1998 – 2012
<b>Spanish Congreso de los Diputados</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comisión Mixta para la Unión Europea</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Propositiones no de Ley</li> </ul>	2008 - 2012
<b>UK House of Commons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plenary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motions</li> </ul>	2005 – 2012

## Appendix 5: Coding Scheme for Resolutions

- *Type of Instrument*: Which type of legislative instrument was chosen (e.g. motion for a resolution by individual MPs/party group or resolution by the whole committee, binding or non-binding)
- *Document*: Document number given by the parliament
- *Committee*: Which committee issued the resolution (e.g. European Affairs Committee or sectoral committee, main- or sub-committee)
- *Date*: Date on which the resolution was issued (group by month/year for analysis)
- *Author*: Who issued the document? (1=whole committee, 0=party group or individual MPs)
- *Sentiment*: Was the resolution supportive or critical (-2= very critical, -1=somewhat critical, 0=neutral, 1=somewhat supportive, 2=very supportive).
  - *Very Critical*: The resolution criticizes an EU proposal or the government's position on the latter. It questions the general approach of the government with regard to its EU policy or challenges the legitimacy of the European Union or the country's membership to it in general.
  - *Somewhat critical*: The resolution criticizes the approach of the government on specific points. It outlines negative consequence of the status quo and/or plans for the future. It suggests an alternative course of action and portrays it as superior.
  - *Neutral*: Technical details of the proposal or the government's actions are elaborated on. No clear judgements in favour or against the proposed act are made. Also request for clarification. The resolution contains both positive and negative elements.
  - *Somewhat supportive*: The EU proposal or action of the government is generally portrayed in a positive light. However, possible danger and precautions are mentioned. Concerns about certain technical points may be expressed.
  - *Very Supportive*: The EU proposal, status quo or position of the government is supported throughout. Potential alternatives are portrayed in a negative way. No precautions or concerns are mentioned.
- *Result*: Was the resolution adopted by the whole committee? (0=rejected, 1=supported, 2=supported unanimously, 3 Spain: supported with amendments, 4=UK: debated in plenary)
- *Text*: Text of the operational part of the resolution
- *Supporters*: Was the resolution supported by party groups other than the initiator (0=no, 1=supported by coalition, 2=supported by opposition)
- *Government*: Was the initiator of the resolution in government? (0=opposition, 1=government)
- *Length of the preamble/explanation*
- *Length of the operational part of operational part of the resolution/motion*
- *Proportion of the lengths of the two parts of the resolution/motion*

## **Appendix 6: Examples of Resolutions by issue entrepreneurs and mainstream parties - Relative lengths of different parts of motions and resolutions**

### **Preamble of a motion initiated by the FPÖ (844 words):**

Folgender Antrag der FPÖ auf Stellungnahme wurde von SPÖ, ÖVP und Grünen mehrheitlich abgelehnt:

#### **Antrag auf Stellungnahme**

(gemäß Art. 23e B-VG)

des Abgeordneten Dr. Hübner und weiterer Abgeordneter

#### **betreffend Ablehnung der „Strategie Europa 2020“**

Nach dürftigen Ergebnissen der so genannten „Lissabon-Strategie“, mit der die EU bis 2010 zum dynamischsten und wettbewerbsfähigsten wissensbasierten Wirtschaftsraum der Welt werden sollte, hat die EU ihre Pläne überarbeitet. Statt Lissabon-Strategie heißt es nun „Europa 2020“ bzw. „EU2020“. Die bisherige Strategie konnte nicht verhindern, dass die EU in ihrem Wachstum zu den Schlusslichtern der Welt gehört. Bleibt abzuwarten, wann der neue Papiertiger in den Schubladen der EU-Bürokratie verschwinden wird.

Bei der letzten Strategie feierte man die „offene Methode der Koordinierung“, sie schien allerdings so offen zu sein, dass kaum Koordinierung stattfand. Kommunikationsmängel, kaum Einbindung der Bundesländer und Regionen sowie keine verpflichtenden Zielvorgaben sollen schuld daran sein, dass das Kalkül nicht aufgegangen ist. Was nun anders sein soll, ist rätselhaft. Der reformierte wirtschaftliche „Schlachtplan“ setzt auf Freiwilligkeit, bei der Nachzügler an den Pranger gestellt werden.

Änderungen durch den Lissabon-Vertrag ermöglichen der EU-Kommission, Verwarnungen auszusprechen. Kommissionspräsident Barroso hat angekündigt, dass er dieses Instrument „voll ausnutzen“ wird. De facto kann er jedoch wenig machen, wenn die EU-Staaten nicht mitspielen. Deshalb gab es wohl im Vorfeld die Diskussion über eine mögliche Einbeziehung der Kohäsionspolitik. Barroso wollte strukturschwachen Regionen die Finanzhilfen entziehen, wenn die Mitgliedstaaten „notwendige Reformen“ verweigern. In der Praxis wären also Regionen und Bürger, die ja so gut wie keine Mitspracherechte haben, für Versäumnisse des Staates abgestraft worden. Und wie sich der „Reformdrang“ auswirkt, konnte Europa in der bisherigen Privatisierungs- und Liberalisierungswelle erleben.

Mit Europa 2020 soll eine „nachhaltige, inklusive soziale Marktwirtschaft“ ermöglicht werden. Dabei wurden drei Prioritäten gesetzt:

intelligentes Wachstum, d.h. Entwicklung einer auf Wissen und Innovation gründenden Wirtschaft,

nachhaltiges Wachstum, d.h. Förderung einer emissionsarmen, ressourcenschonenden und wettbewerbsfähigen Wirtschaft und

integratives Wachstum, d.h. Förderung einer Wirtschaft mit hohem Beschäftigungsniveau sowie sozialem und territorialem Zusammenhalt

Allein die Fokussierung auf die „green economy“ wird nicht reichen, um die Wettbewerbsfähigkeit des Produktionsstandorts Europa zu sichern. Dazu braucht es nämlich nebst funktionierender Energieversorgung und Infrastruktur gut ausgebildete Fachkräfte und nicht eine Einwanderungswelle von Wirtschaftsflüchtlingen, die als Billigarbeiter die Märkte überschwemmen. Und wenn eine Flexibilisierung der nationalen Arbeitsmärkte gefordert wird, dann darf das nicht dazu führen, dass die Übergangsfristen für die neuen Mitgliedsstaaten über die Hintertür ausgehebelt werden. Gerade in Krisenzeiten, in denen immer mehr Menschen arbeitslos sind oder in Teilzeit- und Ein-Euro-Jobs ihr Dasein fristen, darf die EU dem

bestehenden Verdrängungswettbewerb am Arbeitsmarkt nicht neuen Vorschub leisten. Vielmehr muss die EU zu einem Bollwerk gegen die Globalisierung nach US-amerikanischem Vorbild werden.

Wenn die EU-2020-Strategie Erfolg haben soll, müssen die Mitglieder ihre öffentlichen Finanzen unter Kontrolle bekommen, lautet der neueste Tenor. Und die Wunschliste scheint lang: die 2020-Strategie der EU müsse Hand in Hand gehen mit einer Sanierung der nationalen Budgets, der Strukturreformen im Bereich Pension, Gesundheitsleistungen, sozialer Sicherheit und dem Ausbildungssystem. Die Rede ist auch davon, dass bestehende Schwachstellen im europäischen Binnenmarkt eruiert werden sollen und die Dienstleistungsrichtlinie lückenlos umgesetzt wird.

Insgesamt wird mehr oder weniger offen eine europäische Wirtschaftsregierung gefordert und festgehalten, dass Entwicklungen in einem Land Auswirkungen auf ein anderes haben können. Nun mag es im Falle Griechenlands einleuchtend klingen, wenn die Kommission ein Land verwarnt, dessen Wirtschafts- und Finanzpolitik für die ganze EU gefährlich wird. Spätestens bei Floskeln, wie die „Notwendigkeit, die Nachfrage in der EU auszugleichen“, sollten jedoch die Alarmglocken läuten. Wenn wirtschaftlich erfolgreiche Länder, wie beispielsweise die Exportnation Deutschland, die von der Nachfrage anderer Länder profitiert, leise kritisiert werden, spätestens dann sollte jedem klar sein, wohin die Reise geht. Da steht einmal mehr unter dem Deckmantel der „Solidarität“ ein Abbau nationaler Kompetenzen und Rechte im Raum.

Diskutiert wurde auch ein Sachverständigenrat aus fünf Experten und einem Stab zur Bewertung der Ziele. Dieser Beirat würde wohl reine Augenauswischerei bleiben, weil absehbar ist, dass die anvisierten Ziele einmal mehr in der Schublade verschwinden werden.

Auch wenn mittlerweile ein paar konkrete Zielvorgaben genannt wurden, bleibt deren Erfolg zweifelhaft. Die Mitgliedstaaten sind einfach zu unterschiedlich, als dass sie alle in einen Topf geworfen werden können. Die mittel- und europäischen EU-Länder haben eine andere Wirtschafts- und Finanzethik als die südeuropäischen. Und was passiert, wenn man diese Unterschiede bewusst negiert, sieht man an der gegenwärtigen Euro-Krise, die maßgebend durch Griechenland verursacht wurde. Ergo darf die Strategie Europa 2020 nicht zu einer Aushöhlung nationalstaatlicher Restsouveränität durch die Hintertüre führen, für die Wirtschafts- und Finanzpolitik müssen vorrangig die Mitgliedstaaten zuständig bleiben.

Wenn künftig jeder Mitgliedstaat von Brüssel detaillierte wirtschaftspolitische Empfehlungen erhalten soll, dann ist das der falsche Weg. Denn die einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten können besser



als die Brüsseler Bürokraten entscheiden, welche Maßnahmen zu ergreifen sind. Anstatt den Zentralismus weiter auszubauen, sollte es endlich zu Renationalisierungen kommen, etwa im Bereich des Förderwesens.

Sinnvoll kann nur eine europäische Wirtschaftsstrategie sein, die realistische Zielvorgaben beinhaltet. An einigen Stellen jedoch bewegt sich das Strategiepapier gefährlich nahe an planwirtschaftlichen Ansätzen.

Bereits die Lissabon-2010-Strategie erlitt grandios Schiffbruch, womit sich die Frage stellt, warum die EU mit Zehnjahresplänen erfolgreich sein soll, wo doch schon die Sowjetunion mit ihren Fünfjahresplänen gescheitert ist.

Daher stellen die unterzeichnenden Abgeordneten folgenden

**Operational Part of a motion initiated by the FPO (58 words) → Proportion= 0.068**

**Antrag auf Stellungnahme**

gemäß Artikel 23e B-VG

Der Hauptausschuss in Angelegenheiten der Europäischen Union wolle beschließen:

„Die zuständigen Mitglieder der Bundesregierung werden aufgefordert, auf europäischer Ebene – insbesondere auf dem Europäischen Rat am 17. und 18. Juni 2010 – die neue europäische Strategie für Beschäftigung und Wachstum „Europa 2020“ nicht anzunehmen, und gemeinsam mit den Repräsentanten der EU-Mitgliedsstaaten zum einen über Renationalisierungen von Wirtschafts- und Arbeitsmarktförderungen zu verhandeln, zum anderen Strategien für eine Hartwährungszone zu entwickeln.“

Preamble of a motion by the Austria Greens (816 words):

Folgender Antrag der Grünen auf Stellungnahme wurde von den anderen Fraktionen mehrheitlich abgelehnt:

**ANTRAG AUF STELLUNGNAHME**

**gemäß Art. 23e Abs. 2 B-VG**

der Abgeordneten Mag.a Christiane Brunner und Univ. Prof. Dr. Alexander Van der Bellen betreffend Schlussfolgerungen des Europäischen Rates am 29. und 30. Oktober 2009 (20455/EU XXIV.GP) zum Klimawandel

eingbracht im Zuge des EU-Hauptausschusses am 28. Oktober 2009

Von 7.-18.Dezember 2009 findet in Kopenhagen die United Nations Climate Change Conference – die COP15 – statt. Bei dieser Konferenz werden die Weichen für die Zukunft der internationalen Klimaschutzpolitik gestellt. Die Europäische Union wird in Kopenhagen mit einer Stimme verhandeln. Die gemeinsame Verhandlungsposition soll beim kommenden Europäischen Rat (29./30. Oktober 2009) in Brüssel festgelegt werden.

**Wissenschaftsbasierte Reduktionsziele festlegen**

Inzwischen ist es international anerkannt, dass die Erwärmung der globalen Durchschnittstemperatur soweit wie möglich unter zwei Grad Celsius gegenüber dem vorindustriellen Zeitalter liegen muss. Beim G8-Gipfel im Juli 2009 in L'Aquila (Italien) wurde dies in Absprache mit den Schwellenländern wie China und Indien vereinbart.

Die in der Klimarahmenkonvention auch von Österreich beschlossene Vorgabe, „die Stabilisierung der Treibhausgaskonzentrationen in der Atmosphäre auf einem Niveau zu erreichen, auf dem eine gefährliche anthropogene Störung des Klimasystems verhindert wird“, ist in Kopenhagen nach den neuesten Erkenntnissen der Klimawissenschaft, auch nach dem 4. Sachstandsbericht (AR 4) des Weltklimarats (IPCC), umzusetzen. Das bedeutet bei einer politischen Vorgabe einer Erwärmungsobergrenze von maximal 2°C, dass weltweit die Treibhausgasemissionen spätestens 2015 ihren Höhepunkt erreicht haben müssen und bis 2050 um mindestens 80% zu reduzieren sind.

Die aktuellen Reduktionserfordernisse der IPCC bewegen sich für Industrienationen von -25% bis -40% bis 2020 und von -80% bis -95% bis 2050, global von -50% bis -80%.

Die österreichische Bundesregierung sollte sich zu den höheren Reduktionszielen dieser Bandbreiten, - 40% bis 2020 und – 95% bis 2020 für die Industrienationen bzw. global -80% bis 2050 bekennen, um mit einer Wahrscheinlichkeit von über 66% unter einer maximalen Erwärmung von 2°C zu bleiben.

**Mindestziele für Erneuerbare Energien aufnehmen**

Analog zu den 20/20/20 Zielen der EU müssen auch auf globaler Ebene verbindliche Mindestziele für erneuerbare Energien weltweit festgelegt werden. Die internationale Klimakonferenz von Kopenhagen bietet dafür eine einmalige Möglichkeit. Der Anteil Erneuerbarer Energie am Weltprimärenergieverbrauch sollte bis 2020 mindestens 20% betragen und bis 2050 auf 60% ansteigen. Speziell für den Strombereich sind solche Ausbauziele notwendig um eine mögliche Atomrenaissance zu verhindern, denn die alleinige Bepreisung von CO<sub>2</sub>-Emissionen macht die Atomenergie rentabler. Daher sollte der Anteil erneuerbarer Energie im Strombereich verbindlich festgelegt global bis 2020 bei 30% und bis 2050 bei 80% liegen.

**Finanzierung von Klimaschutz und Anpassung in Entwicklungs- und Schwellenländern**

Die Entwicklungs- und Schwellenländer haben historisch weit geringere absolute und auch pro Kopf gerechnete Treibhausgasemissionen zu verantworten. Dennoch sind sie am stärksten von den Auswirkungen der globalen Erwärmung betroffen. In diesem Sinne bedeutet die „Common but differentiated responsibility“ (gemeinsame aber unterschiedliche Verantwortung) aller Vertragsstaaten der Klimarahmenkonvention, dass bei den Klimaschutzverhandlungen in Kopenhagen die Industriestaaten nicht nur höhere

Klimaschutzziele zu übernehmen haben, sondern gleichzeitig Transferzahlungen für Mitigation (Senkung der Treibhausgasemissionen), Adaption (Anpassung) und Kompensation (Entschädigung für Klimaschäden) an die Entwicklungsländer zu leisten haben.

Die Bundesregierung muss sich für einen gerechten europäischen Beitrag für diese Finanzierung von 35 Mrd. Euro pro Jahr bis 2020 einsetzen. Ohne konkrete und ausreichende Finanzierungsangebote der EU in Kopenhagen wird es keine Einigung auf ein globales Klimaschutzabkommen geben.

#### **Klimaschutz muss im Inland stattfinden**

Der Rechnungshof (2008/11) verweist darauf, dass „der Kauf von Emissionszertifikaten keine Alternative zur Reduktion von Treibhausgasemissionen durch nationale Maßnahmen“ sei und auch international mehrten sich wissenschaftlichen Studien, die belegen, dass die flexiblen Mechanismen (Emissionszertifikate-Handel, Clean Development Mechanism und Joint Implementation) des Kyoto-Protokolls netto gar keine Emissionsminderungen bringen. Wenn die Bundesregierung Energieautarkie ernst nimmt und die Vorteile von heimischem Klimaschutz nutzen will, dann muss sich Österreich zu 100% Klimaschutz im Inland bekennen.

Die Bundesregierung sollte für ein Auslaufen der flexiblen Mechanismen Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) und JI (Joint Implementation) nach 2012 weltweit eintreten. Grüne Projekte und Politiken in den Entwicklungsländern, vor allem auch in den am wenigsten entwickelten Ländern, sollten aus dem Topf für Anpassung und Klimaschutz finanziert werden ohne dass weiterhin ein Transfer von CO<sub>2</sub>-Rechten von den Entwicklungsländern zu den Industrieländern möglich ist.

#### **Atomkraft und andere Risikotechnologien raus aus dem Klimaschutz**

In jüngster Zeit erlebt die Atomkraft eine Renaissance als so genannte saubere Energie, obwohl sich die damit verbundenen Risiken nicht verändert haben. Die Bundesregierung muss sich gegen jegliche direkte oder auch nur indirekte Unterstützung der Atomkraft aussprechen und für einen möglichst raschen globalen Ausstieg aus dieser Risikotechnologie einsetzen. Daher muss die Bundesregierung im Rahmen der EU dafür eintreten, dass Atomkraft in Kopenhagen aus den projektbezogenen flexiblen Mechanismen ausgeschlossen bleibt und auch nicht aus dem neuen Transfertopf für Adaption, Mitigation und Kompensation unterstützt wird. Das gleiche wie für die Atomenergie gilt für die neue Risikotechnologie der Abscheidung und Endlagerung von fossilem Kohlendioxid (CCS). Ungeklärte Haftungsfragen, permanente und plötzliche Leckagen von CO<sub>2</sub>, hoher Energieeinsatz und hohe Kosten im Vergleich zu erneuerbaren Energien und Energieeffizienz, sowie die zu erwartende sehr späte Einsatzmöglichkeit von fossilem CCS in 10-20 Jahren sprechen gegen diese teure Risikotechnologie.

#### **Operational part of a motion by the Austrian Greens (464 words) → proportion 0.56)**

##### **Antrag auf Stellungnahme**

##### **gemäß Art 23e Abs. 2 B-VG**

Der Ausschuss wolle beschließen:

Die zuständigen Mitglieder der Bundesregierung, insbesondere der Bundeskanzler und der Bundesminister für Umwelt, werden dringend und mit Nachdruck aufgefordert, sich beim Europäischen Rat in Brüssel am 29. und 30. Oktober sowie bei weiteren EU-Verhandlungen zur Vorbereitung der UN-Klimakonferenz in Kopenhagen für die Aufnahme folgender Punkte in die Schlussfolgerungen einzusetzen:

**1. Reduktion der Treibhausgas-Emissionen bis 2020 und 2050** Auf Basis der aktuellen Reduktionsempfehlungen des Weltklimarats verpflichtet sich die Europäische Union in einem Kyoto-Nachfolgeregime zu einer kollektiven CO<sub>2</sub>-Reduktion von 40% bis 2020 und 95% bis 2050 verglichen mit 1990. Für die globalen Reduktionsziele fordert die EU minus 80% bis 2050 (Basisjahr 1990)

bzw. minus 95% für Industrienationen.

Spätestens 2015 müssen die Treibhausgasemissionen weltweit ihren Zenit erreicht haben und danach stetig sinken

## **2. Mindestziele Erneuerbare Energien**

Die EU setzt sich für die Festschreibung stetig steigender, verbindlicher Mindestziele für erneuerbare Energien weltweit im Kyoto-Nachfolgeregime ein.

Der Anteil Erneuerbarer Energie am Weltprimärenergieverbrauch sollte bis 2020 mindestens 20% betragen und bis 2050 auf 60% ansteigen.

Der Anteil erneuerbarer Energie im Strombereich sollte global bis 2020 bei 30% und bis 2050 bei 80% liegen.

## **3. Finanzierung von Mitigation (Senkung der Treibhausgasemissionen), Adaption (Anpassung) und Kompensation (Entschädigung für Klimaschäden)**

Die Europäische Union verpflichtet sich zu einem europäischen Beitrag zur Finanzierung von Klimaschutzmaßnahmen, Anpassung und Entschädigung für Schäden durch den Klimawandel in den Entwicklungsländern von mindestens 5-7 Mrd. Euro pro Jahr für die erste Periode bis 2013, dem Jahr des Inkrafttretens eines Nachfolgeregimes für das Kyoto Protokoll.

Dieser EU-Beitrag zur weltweiten Finanzierung wird kontinuierlich bis auf 35 Mrd.

Euro pro Jahr im Jahr 2020 ansteigen und Teil einer internationalen Finanzierung durch die Industrienationen von Anpassungs- und Klimaschutzmaßnahmen in den Entwicklungsländern von 120 Mrd. Euro bis 2020 sein.

Die Bereitstellung der Finanzierung durch die Industrienationen wird von diesen garantiert, ist neu und zusätzlich zu bestehenden Entwicklungshilfegeldern (ODAs) und ist unabhängig von jährlichen Budgetprozessen der EU-Mitgliedsstaaten.

## **4. Klimaschutz zu Hause („domestic action“) und Umgang mit „heißer Luft“**

Die EU verlangt weltweit ein Auslaufen von CDM und JI mit dem Ende des Kyoto-Protokolls. Nach 2012 werden Grüne Projekte und Politiken in den Entwicklungsländern aus dem Topf für Anpassung und Klimaschutz finanziert werden, ohne dass weiterhin ein Transfer von CO<sub>2</sub>-Rechten von den Entwicklungsländern zu den Industrieländern möglich ist.

Die Europäische Union tritt für eine Streichung von übrig gebliebenen, nicht konsumierten staatlichen Verschmutzungsrechten (Assigned Amount Units) ein.

Diese „heiße Luft“, die v.a. nach dem wirtschaftlichen Zusammenbruch der ehemaligen Ostblockländer entstanden ist, soll in den Reduktionsperioden ab 2013 nicht mehr zur Verfügung stehen.

## **5. Nein zu Atom und anderen Risikotechnologien**

Sollte der CDM weiter bestehen, fordert die EU, dass der Ausschluss der Atomkraft und fossilem CCS („carbon capture & storage“) eingehalten wird.

## Appendix 7: Descriptive Statistics

**Table 14:** Descriptive statistics for resolutions showing number of observations, mean, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values.

Variable	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>Resolutions</b>	3,866	0.4855	1.117	0	12
<b>Sentiment</b>	983	-0.115	1.339	-2	2
<b>Ratio</b>	727	1.560	14.026	0	375
<b>Government</b>	5,410	0.267	0.442	0	1
<b>Formal Rights</b>	5,614	1.443	0.501	0.833	2.166
<b>Presidency</b>	5,747	0.123	0.328	0	1
<b>Public Euroscepticism</b>	5,243	-0.318	0.161	-0.62	0.11
<b>Issue Entrepreneurship</b>	5,177	-0.475	3.751	-8.331	12.768
<b>Party Position</b>	5,177	5.281	1.502	1.75	7
<b>Internal Dissent</b>	5,177	3.129	1.474	.77	8.91
<b>Left-Right Position</b>	5,155	3.888	2.635	0.055	9.67
<b>Seat Share</b>	5,166	0.188	0.182	0	0.616

## **Appendix 8: Robustness Checks Resolutions**

A first robustness checks operationalizes the concept of issue entrepreneurs in a binary rather than continuous way (Table 15). For this analysis, as issue entrepreneurship score (based on CHES) of 2 was used as a cut-off point to group parties into issue entrepreneurs and non-issue entrepreneurs. The coefficient for the issue entrepreneurship dummy is again significant and in the expected direction. The results of the analysis thus seem to be robust for a number of different operationalization, highlighting the validity of the findings of this paper.

As described above, data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) were used to operationalise the issue entrepreneurship score, following Hobolt and De Vries (2015, p. 285). A potential criticism of this operationalisation is that there might be an endogeneity problem because the observations of the experts might be influenced by the activity of national parliaments and parties in the first place. To control for this, the analysis was also run using the EU position data (negative mentions subtracted from positive mentions of the EU, per110-per108) from the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP, 2015). Given that in contrast to the CHES survey, the CMP is based on an analysis of party manifestos, endogeneity is not likely to be a problem. The analysis with the alternative measure yielded very similar results to the analysis discussed above and are displayed below in Table 16. The coefficient for the CMP EU position is significant for all models except for the overall valence, the valence of unsuccessful resolutions and the ratio. In contrast to the issue entrepreneurship score, the CMP EU position is constructed in such a way that more positive mentions of the EU in party manifestos lead to a higher score. Thus, the coefficient is negative where the issue entrepreneurship score was expected to be positive, and vice versa.

As a further robustness check, the models were run with dummies for party families instead of a position score as a continuous variable (Table 17). This measure makes it possible to assess whether indeed particular types of parties are responsible for an increase in resolutions. It becomes obvious that nationalist parties generally initiate more and more critical resolutions. However, Green and Liberal parties also issue significantly more resolutions than the baseline category (Social Democratic Parties). The resolutions of Nationalist parties are also generally more critical, as are resolutions of extreme left parties

A final group of model estimates the results for random intercepts at the level party groups and countries (Table 18).

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**Table 15** Robustness check for the analysis of resolutions using issue entrepreneur score >1 as dummy.

*Model 1: All resolutions (count), Model 2: successful resolutions (count), Model 3: Unsuccessful resolutions (count), Model 4: All resolutions (valence), Model 5 successful resolutions (valence), Model 6 unsuccessful resolutions (valence), Model 7: Ratio unsuccessful resolution*

	Model1	Model2	Model3	Model4	Model5	Model6	Model 7
<b>Issue Entrepreneur &gt; 1 (Dummy)</b>	<b>0.743***</b>	<b>-0.327</b>	<b>0.911***</b>	<b>-0.657***</b>	<b>-0.404**</b>	<b>-0.293***</b>	<b>-0.100</b>
	(0.203)	(0.680)	(0.222)	(0.119)	(0.200)	(0.086)	(0.078)
<b>Internal Dissent</b>	<b>0.068</b>	<b>-0.105</b>	<b>0.038</b>	<b>-0.102***</b>	<b>0.005</b>	<b>-0.076**</b>	<b>0.009</b>
	(0.068)	(0.143)	(0.082)	(0.038)	(0.056)	(0.034)	(0.024)
<b>Left / Right Position</b>	<b>-0.033*</b>	<b>0.026</b>	<b>-0.030</b>	<b>-0.013</b>	<b>0.018</b>	<b>-0.012</b>	<b>-0.044***</b>
	(0.018)	(0.041)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.036)	(0.013)	(0.014)
<b>Formal Powers</b>	<b>0.352</b>	<b>0.574</b>	<b>0.173</b>	<b>0.247*</b>	<b>1.878***</b>	<b>0.255</b>	<b>0.094</b>
	(0.333)	(0.429)	(0.379)	(0.140)	(0.330)	(0.160)	0.090
<b>Government</b>	<b>-0.320***</b>	<b>1.102***</b>	<b>-1.402***</b>	<b>1.357***</b>	<b>0.077</b>	<b>0.565***</b>	<b>0.009</b>
	(0.094)	(0.185)	(0.122)	(0.136)	(0.217)	(0.131)	(0.112)
<b>Presidency</b>	<b>0.097</b>	<b>-0.327</b>	<b>0.209</b>	<b>-0.191</b>	<b>0.901*</b>	<b>-0.039</b>	<b>0.142</b>
	(0.144)	(0.262)	(0.164)	(0.161)	(0.460)	(0.110)	(0.094)
<b>Euroscepticism</b>	<b>-2.647***</b>	<b>-1.763</b>	<b>-1.712*</b>	<b>0.317</b>	<b>0.174</b>	<b>0.181</b>	<b>0.143</b>
	(0.774)	(1.445)	(0.915)	(0.284)	(0.554)	(0.272)	(0.227)
<b>Euroscepticism x Issue Ent&gt; 1</b>	<b>3.987***</b>	<b>0.721</b>	<b>4.295***</b>				
	(0.678)	(2.109)	(0.734)				
<b>Euroscepticism x Internal Dissent</b>	<b>0.290</b>	<b>0.415</b>	<b>-0.188</b>				
	(0.189)	(0.356)	(0.227)				
<b>Seat share</b>	<b>-0.780**</b>	<b>2.290**</b>	<b>-0.707*</b>	<b>0.249</b>	<b>0.315</b>	<b>0.206</b>	<b>0.028</b>
	(0.356)	(0.930)	(0.427)	(0.376)	(0.512)	(0.330)	(0.182)
<b>Constant</b>	<b>-4.186***</b>	<b>-8.643***</b>	<b>-3.886***</b>	<b>0.042</b>	<b>-1.645</b>	<b>-0.453</b>	<b>0.370</b>
	(0.702)	(1.116)	(0.806)	(0.572)	(1.014)	(0.451)	(0.366)
<b>Variance (Country)</b>	<b>3.603</b>	<b>9.97e-34</b>	<b>39.626</b>	<b>3.50e-19</b>	<b>0.125</b>	<b>7.98e-19</b>	<b>5.86e-18</b>
	(3.712)	(1.17e-18)	(41.529)	.	(0.147)	(2.08e-17)	(1.45e-16)



Variance (Party Group)	3.876	1.067878	2.336	0.003	4.02e-16	1.88e-19	0.008
	(2.080)	(0.450)	(2.106)	(0.010)	(5.50e-15)	(2.06e-18)	(0.009)
Variance (Residual)				0.643	0.255	0.250	0.526
				(0.078)	(0.032)	(0.021)	(0.025)
Variance explained				47%	59%	61%	30%
Inter-class correlation (country)				0.00	0.33	0.00	0.00
Inter –class correlation (party family)				0.05	0.00	0.00	0.01
AIC	5940.626	3104.425	3933.054	1039.409	234.2344	386.5718	1953.253
BIC	6038.151	3195.854	4030.578	1091.994	274.5937	435.7032	2020.06
Observations	3,244	3,244	3,244	422	132	247	873
Parties	25	26	25	20	15	15	15
Countries	5	5	5	5	5	4	4

**Table 16:** Robustness check for the analysis of resolutions using CMP scores.’

*Model 1: All resolutions (count), Model 2: successful resolutions (count), Model 3: Unsuccessful resolutions (count), Model 4: All resolutions (valence), Model 5 successful resolutions (valence), Model 6 unsuccessful resolutions (valence), Model 7: Ratio unsuccessful resolutions*

	<b>Model1</b>	<b>Model2</b>	<b>Model3</b>	<b>Model4</b>	<b>Model5</b>	<b>Model6</b>	<b>Model 7</b>
<b>CMPEU</b>	<b>-0.175***</b>	<b>-0.0919</b>	<b>-0.217***</b>	<b>0.00271</b>	<b>0.0748**</b>	<b>0.0152</b>	<b>-0.037</b>
	(0.0600)	(0.101)	(0.0777)	(0.0364)	(0.0363)	(0.0317)	(0.018)
<b>Internal Dissent</b>	<b>0.174</b>	<b>0.0117</b>	<b>0.249*</b>	<b>-0.171***</b>	<b>0.0541</b>	<b>-0.00826</b>	<b>-0.014</b>
	(0.112)	(0.182)	(0.147)	(0.0588)	(0.0767)	(0.0497)	(0.027)
<b>Left/Right CMP</b>	<b>0.0129***</b>	<b>0.0211**</b>	<b>0.0150***</b>	<b>0.000384</b>	<b>-0.00347</b>	<b>0.00273</b>	<b>0.000</b>
	(0.00331)	(0.0103)	(0.00393)	(0.00516)	(0.00729)	(0.00231)	(0.001)
<b>Formal Rights</b>	<b>-1.838*</b>	<b>0.0677</b>	<b>0.193</b>	<b>0.212</b>	<b>1.717***</b>	<b>0.0441</b>	<b>0.196</b>
	(1.087)	(0.602)	(1.529)	(0.268)	(0.334)	(0.341)	(0.136)
<b>Government</b>	<b>-0.443***</b>	<b>0.895***</b>	<b>-1.441***</b>	<b>1.350***</b>	<b>0.682**</b>	<b>0.0253</b>	<b>0.191</b>
	(0.118)	(0.193)	(0.162)	(0.185)	(0.278)	(0.159)	(0.136)
<b>Presidency</b>	<b>0.0944</b>	<b>-0.259</b>	<b>0.128</b>	<b>-0.228</b>	<b>1.172***</b>	<b>-0.0766</b>	<b>0.224</b>
	(0.149)	(0.251)	(0.184)	(0.173)	(0.429)	(0.102)	(0.099)
<b>Euroscepticism</b>	<b>0.893</b>	<b>-0.624</b>	<b>0.992</b>	<b>-0.239</b>	<b>-0.437</b>	<b>-0.312</b>	<b>0.022</b>
	(1.071)	(1.804)	(1.324)	(0.461)	(0.381)	(0.466)	(0.099)
<b>Curoscepticismprop X CMPEU</b>	<b>-0.985***</b>	<b>-0.568*</b>	<b>-0.993***</b>				
	(0.205)	(0.341)	(0.262)				
<b>Euroscepticismprop X Dissentparty</b>	<b>0.509*</b>	<b>0.717*</b>	<b>0.184</b>				
	(0.266)	(0.423)	(0.343)				
<b>Seatshare</b>	<b>0.0220</b>	<b>1.167</b>	<b>0.506</b>	<b>1.276**</b>	<b>0.960*</b>	<b>-0.0690</b>	<b>0.086</b>
	(0.445)	(1.021)	(0.584)	(0.601)	(0.509)	(0.353)	(0.215)
<b>Constant</b>	<b>0.667</b>	<b>-8.598***</b>	<b>-3.444</b>	<b>-0.885</b>	<b>-1.495</b>	<b>-0.246</b>	<b>0.607</b>
	(2.165)	(1.377)	(3.092)	(0.821)	(1.107)	(0.852)	(0.375)

<b>Variance (Country)</b>	<b>15.074</b>	<b>5.18e-24</b>	<b>20.823</b>	<b>8.24e-17</b>	<b>8.18e-25</b>	<b>1.14e-24</b>	<b>6.96e-21</b>
	(12.850)	(2.05e-11)	(28.353)	(2.46e-15)	.	.	(1.84e-19)
<b>Variance (Party Group)</b>	<b>3.256</b>	<b>1.588</b>	<b>0.347</b>	<b>0.052</b>	<b>8.22e-26</b>	<b>6.20e-26</b>	<b>1.84e-21</b>
	(1.694)	(0.729)	(0.429)	(0.077)	(1.09e-24)	(7.63e-22)	(2.47e-20)
<b>Variance (Residual)</b>				<b>0.657</b>	<b>0.246</b>	<b>0.187</b>	<b>0.561</b>
				(0.071)	(0.034)	(0.021)	(0.030)
<b>Variance explained</b>				<b>45%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Inter-class correlation (country)</b>				<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Inter –class correlation (party family)</b>				<b>0.07</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>AIC</b>	<b>4218.421</b>	<b>2318.545</b>	<b>2673.092</b>	<b>724.167</b>	<b>175.448</b>	<b>196.77</b>	<b>1538.584</b>
<b>BIC</b>	<b>4312.041</b>	<b>2406.314</b>	<b>2766.712</b>	<b>775.2033</b>	<b>209.8251</b>	<b>235.6456</b>	<b>1601.644</b>
<b>Observations</b>	<b>2,569</b>	<b>2,569</b>	<b>2,569</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>668</b>
<b>Parties</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Number of groups</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>

**Table 17** Robustness check for the analysis of resolution using party families.

*Model 1: All resolutions (count), Model 2: successful resolutions (count), Model 3: Unsuccessful resolutions (count), Model 4: All resolutions (valence), Model 5: successful resolutions (valence), Model 6: unsuccessful resolutions (valence), Model 7: Ratio unsuccessful resolutions*

*† Dummy for party family based on CMP. Omitted baseline category: Social Democratic Parties (SOC).*

	Model1	Model2	Model3	Model4	Model5	Model6	Model 7
<b>Internal Dissent</b>	<b>-0.0656*</b>	<b>-0.269***</b>	<b>0.0927**</b>	<b>-0.183***</b>	<b>-0.120***</b>	<b>-0.145***</b>	<b>0.025</b>
	(0.0357)	(0.0628)	(0.0440)	(0.0306)	(0.0352)	(0.0259)	(0.024)
<b>Left / Right Position</b>	<b>-0.0150</b>	<b>0.0424</b>	<b>-0.0417</b>	<b>0.0521***</b>	<b>0.0604**</b>	<b>0.0112</b>	<b>-0.110***</b>
	(0.0226)	(0.0424)	(0.0264)	(0.0196)	(0.0278)	(0.0157)	(0.030)
<b>Formal Powers</b>	<b>0.866***</b>	<b>0.473</b>	<b>0.439</b>	<b>-0.102</b>	<b>1.357***</b>	<b>-0.0344</b>	<b>0.105</b>
	(0.314)	(0.464)	(0.391)	(0.251)	(0.134)	(0.112)	(0.088)
<b>Government</b>	<b>-0.391***</b>	<b>1.100***</b>	<b>-1.509***</b>	<b>1.851***</b>	<b>0.00300</b>	<b>1.451***</b>	<b>-0.018</b>
	(0.0950)	(0.185)	(0.126)	(0.0834)	(0.113)	(0.0808)	(0.113)
<b>Presidency</b>	<b>0.0588</b>	<b>-0.343</b>	<b>0.156</b>	<b>-0.0106</b>	<b>0.121</b>	<b>-0.0276</b>	<b>0.150</b>
	(0.142)	(0.261)	(0.164)	(0.117)	(0.174)	(0.106)	(0.093)
<b>Euroscepticism</b>	<b>-0.974**</b>	<b>-0.685</b>	<b>-1.413***</b>	<b>0.407</b>	<b>-0.299</b>	<b>0.156</b>	<b>-0.169</b>
	(0.421)	(0.779)	(0.523)	(0.357)	(0.276)	(0.240)	(0.257)
<b>Seat share</b>	<b>1.981***</b>	<b>2.504**</b>	<b>1.035</b>	<b>0.491</b>	<b>-0.454</b>	<b>2.049***</b>	<b>-0.001</b>
	(0.706)	(0.973)	(1.030)	(0.543)	(0.455)	(0.521)	(0.182)
<b>ECO †</b>	<b>0.998***</b>	<b>0.227</b>	<b>0.652**</b>	<b>0.184</b>	<b>-0.163</b>	<b>0.364**</b>	<b>-0.121</b>
	(0.223)	(0.711)	(0.304)	(0.424)	(0.189)	(0.148)	(0.080)
<b>COM †</b>	<b>-0.236</b>	<b>-1.129</b>	<b>-0.317</b>	<b>-0.786**</b>	<b>-1.429***</b>	<b>-0.489***</b>	<b>-0.273**</b>
	(0.274)	(0.798)	(0.348)	(0.258)	(0.621)	(0.241)	(0.111)
<b>LIB †</b>	<b>0.774***</b>	<b>-1.118</b>	<b>0.897***</b>	<b>-0.159</b>	<b>-0.332</b>	<b>0.040</b>	<b>0.122</b>
	(0.234)	(0.832)	(0.309)	(0.392)	(0.214)	(0.158)	(0.117)
<b>CHR †</b>	<b>0.0511</b>	<b>-0.994</b>	<b>0.427**</b>	<b>-0.226</b>	<b>-0.321**</b>	<b>0.00650</b>	<b>0.336</b>
	(0.139)	(0.759)	(0.174)	(0.433)	(0.136)	(0.103)	(0.139)
<b>CON†</b>	<b>-1.328</b>	<b>-1.172*</b>	<b>-0.141</b>	<b>-0.179</b>	<b>0.348*</b>	<b>-1.334***</b>	<b>0.211</b>
	(1.237)	(0.650)	(1.254)	(0.384)	(0.188)	(0.310)	(1.237))
<b>NAT†</b>	<b>0.656***</b>	<b>-0.375</b>	<b>0.726***</b>	<b>-0.969**</b>	<b>-0.699**</b>	<b>-0.622***</b>	<b>0.330</b>
	(0.224)	(0.816)	(0.271)	(0.440)	(0.273)	(0.151)	(0.222)
<b>Constant</b>	<b>-5.769***</b>	<b>-7.877***</b>	<b>-5.181***</b>	<b>-0.202</b>	<b>0.588</b>	<b>-1.580***</b>	<b>-0.245***</b>
	(0.732)	(1.043)	(0.901)	(0.471)	(0.601)	(0.280)	(0.406)
<b>Variance (Country)</b>	<b>0.052</b>	<b>6.13e-34</b>	<b>30.385</b>	<b>1.44e-21</b>	<b>4.19e-19</b>	<b>6.26e-19</b>	<b>1.61e-17</b>
	(0.819)	(1.52e-18)	(33.641)	(2.98e-20 )	(9.20e-18)	(1.64e-16 )	(3.36e-16)

Variance (Party Group)	4.668	0.860	0 2.58	3.04e-23	1.08e-21	5.19e-20	8.27e-19
	(2.410)	(0.391)	(2.268)	(2.91e-22)	(1.37e-20)	(1.22e-18)	(9.74e-18)
Variance (Residual)				0.629	0.244	0.244	0.522
				(0.043)	(0.030)	(0.287)	(0.025)
Variance explained				48%	61%	61%	30%
Inter-class correlation (country)				0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Inter –class correlation (party family)				0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
AIC	5923.794	3107.972	3933.705	1093.209	293.3449	390.5692	1949.209
BIC	6039.604	3217.688	4043.42	1170.728	349.9029	453.8109	2039.876
Observations	3,244	3,244	3,244	422	132	247	873
Parties	26	26	26	21	21	21	16
Countries	5	5	5	5	5	4	4

**Table 18:**  
Robustness check  
for the analysis  
with random  
intercepts for  
party groups and  
countries.

Model 1: All  
resolutions  
(count), Model 2:  
successful  
resolutions  
(count), Model 3:  
Unsuccessful  
resolutions  
(count), Model 4:  
All resolutions  
(valence), Model 5:  
successful  
resolutions  
(valence), Model 6:  
unsuccessful  
resolutions  
(valence), Model  
7: Ratio  
unsuccessful  
resolutions

	Model1	Model2	Model3	Model4	Model5	Model6	Model 7
<b>Issue Entrepreneur</b>	<b>0.0868***</b>	<b>-0.0197</b>	<b>0.102***</b>	<b>-0.0659***</b>	<b>-0.0186</b>	<b>-0.0251**</b>	<b>-0.024*</b>
	(0.0200)	(0.0709)	(0.0222)	(0.0165)	(0.0390)	(0.0113)	(0.124)
<b>Internal Dissent</b>	<b>0.0735</b>	<b>-0.0585</b>	<b>0.0161</b>	<b>-0.0844*</b>	<b>-0.0280</b>	<b>-0.00569</b>	<b>0.006</b>
	(0.0743)	(0.152)	(0.0904)	(0.0432)	(0.0657)	(0.0397)	(0.124))
<b>Left/Right</b>	<b>-0.0137</b>	<b>0.0432</b>	<b>-0.0106</b>	<b>-0.0176</b>	<b>0.0188</b>	<b>-0.0134</b>	<b>-0.040</b>
	(0.0171)	(0.0386)	(0.0192)	(0.0198)	(0.0333)	(0.0134)	(0.015)
<b>Formal Rights</b>	<b>0.464</b>	<b>0.497</b>	<b>0.109</b>	<b>0.232</b>	<b>2.099***</b>	<b>0.249</b>	<b>0.100</b>
	(0.336)	(0.469)	(0.380)	(0.161)	(0.402)	(0.200)	(0.092)
<b>Government</b>	<b>-0.356***</b>	<b>1.165***</b>	<b>-1.433***</b>	<b>1.358***</b>	<b>0.0650</b>	<b>0.448***</b>	<b>0.001</b>
	(0.0944)	(0.186)	(0.124)	(0.141)	(0.202)	(0.140)	(0.112)
<b>Presidency</b>	<b>0.0921</b>	<b>-0.221</b>	<b>0.199</b>	<b>-0.203</b>	<b>1.085**</b>	<b>-0.0637</b>	0.137
	(0.142)	(0.250)	(0.165)	(0.161)	(0.429)	(0.112)	(0.094)
<b>Euroscepticism</b>	<b>-1.324*</b>	<b>-1.690</b>	<b>-0.186</b>	<b>0.0322</b>	<b>0.234</b>	<b>0.0758</b>	0.117
	(0.767)	(1.523)	(0.886)	(0.300)	(0.644)	(0.293)	(0.231))
<b>Euroscepticism x Issue Ent</b>	<b>0.516***</b>	<b>0.374</b>	<b>0.605***</b>				
	(0.0901)	(0.267)	(0.100)				
<b>Euroscepticism x Internal Dissent</b>	<b>0.277</b>	<b>0.583</b>	<b>-0.261</b>				
	(0.196)	(0.365)	(0.234)				
<b>Seat Share</b>	<b>-0.211</b>	<b>2.276***</b>	<b>-0.726*</b>	<b>0.599</b>	<b>0.458</b>	<b>0.274</b>	<b>0.256</b>
	(0.324)	(0.737)	(0.418)	(0.392)	(0.470)	(0.334)	(0.183)
<b>Constant</b>	<b>-4.776***</b>	<b>-9.607***</b>	<b>-3.610***</b>	<b>-0.474</b>	<b>-2.241**</b>	<b>-0.631</b>	<b>0.295</b>
	(0.683)	(1.102)	(0.793)	(0.569)	(0.974)	(0.491)	(0.358)
<b>Variance (Country)</b>	<b>1.592</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>37.85</b>	<b>1.72e-13</b>	<b>.1164236</b>	<b>5.41e-23</b>	<b>9.89e-19</b>
	(2.306)	(0.00)	(42.51)	3.47e-12	(0.157)	(6.50e-22)	(2.41e-17)
<b>Variance (Party Group)</b>	<b>3.308</b>	<b>0.926**</b>	<b>2.153</b>	<b>0.008</b>	<b>3.45e-17</b>	<b>5.41e-23</b>	0.009
	(2.065)	(0.419)	(2.187)	0.015	(4.73e-16)	(6.50e-22)	(0.104)

<b>Variance (Residual)</b>				<b>0.646</b>	<b>0.256</b>	<b>0.255</b>	0.524
				(0.046)	(0.033)	(0.023)	(0.056)
<b>Variance explained</b>				<b>47%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>Inter-class correlation (country)</b>				<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.31</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Inter –class correlation (party family)</b>				<b>0.02</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.17</b>
<b>AIC</b>	<b>5881.248</b>	<b>3052.536</b>	<b>3887.883</b>	<b>1035.951</b>	<b>234.3758</b>	<b>388.2056</b>	<b>1538.584</b>
<b>BIC</b>	<b>5978.307</b>	<b>3143.529</b>	<b>3984.942</b>	<b>1092.448</b>	<b>274.735</b>	<b>437.2232</b>	<b>1601.644</b>
<b>Observations</b>	<b>3,185</b>	<b>3,185</b>	<b>3,185</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>873</b>
<b>Party families</b>				<b>17</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Countries</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>

### **Paper 3: Parliamentary Scrutiny and the Fiscal Compact: Issue Entrepreneurs, Parliamentary Activity and Effectiveness**

#### **Abstract**

The management of the Euro crisis in general and the recent Fiscal Compact as a response to it in particular provide a highly pertinent case to study parliamentary activity in EU related matters in a situation of high salience. This paper finds that the most active parties in debating the Fiscal Compact and framing it to the public were issue entrepreneurs - parties for which Europe is extremely salient and which are Eurosceptic. The presence of these parties and their interaction with mainstream parties shaped the way the Treaty was scrutinized in national parliaments. Mainstream opposition parties could have a significant influence when they were able to tie their agreement to the Treaty to ‘side payments’ on other issues. Moreover, rebel Members of Parliament (MPs) in mainstream government parties had some significant influence on the governments’ position. The paper thus shows that the presence of issue entrepreneurs and the patterns of their interaction with mainstream parties were the most important factors determining how active a parliament was in scrutinising the Fiscal Compact. Formal ratification powers and macroeconomic factors were of secondary importance. However, as the case of the issue entrepreneurs illustrates, effectiveness in the sense of policy influence is not usually the consequence of activity, nor is it necessarily its goal. These findings have implications beyond the role of national parliaments in ratifying international treaties for the evaluation of the parliamentary activity of EU affairs in general.



## **Introduction**

The recent Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union (TSCG), commonly referred to as the Fiscal Compact, has received significant attention in the media and in academic circles as an important reaction to the Eurocrisis. The scrutiny of the Fiscal Compact in and impact on national parliaments has been particularly important in this context. The Treaty presents itself as a pertinent case study to analyse the activity of national parliaments in scrutinising ‘history making decisions (Peterson and Bomberg, 1999), but also teaches important lessons on how parliamentary scrutiny works in general in contexts of high salience and politicization. This paper thus aims to analyse in detail the factors which determined how the parliaments of Austria, Germany, Ireland and the United Kingdom scrutinised the Fiscal Compact.

The findings of this paper suggest that issue entrepreneurs are the drivers of activity in parliamentary scrutiny of EU affairs. Issue entrepreneurs frequently contribute to debates in the plenary, initiate many resolutions in committees and often resort to extra-parliamentary means of protest. These strategies are generally the same for all issue entrepreneurs, but left-wing parties focus more on the economic consequences of the Fiscal Compact while right-wing parties concentrate on questions of sovereignty. Issue entrepreneurs from both sides of the political spectrum use their criticism to appeal to different audiences. The presence of issue entrepreneurs strongly influences the extent and pattern of scrutiny activity of mainstream parties. Parliament as a whole thus becomes more active, especially with regard to the communication function. In terms of effectiveness of parliamentary involvement, the presence of issue entrepreneurs can be detrimental. The scrutiny process can become strongly politicized

and driven along ideological lines. A consequence of this is that there is an ‘overload’ of scrutiny capacity and a focus on broad questions relating to the legitimacy of the European Union instead of practical points which could actually be influenced by parliament.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: First, the relevant literature on the role of national parliaments in treaty changes and the theoretical framework including the definition of issue entrepreneurs for this paper are presented. Third, the methodology and case selection are elaborated on. The fourth section contains the main part of the analysis. The last section provides a discussion of the findings.

### **Theoretical Framework: The Driving Force of Issue Entrepreneurs**

‘Issue entrepreneurs’ are defined as parties which see the EU critical and for which European integration is salient (Hobolt and De Vries, 2015, p. 3). Moreover, they must have a position on European integration which differentiates them from the other parties represented in the respective national parliament. In other words, they adopt a larger ‘framing distance’, i.e. their framing of the issue of European integration differs more from mainstream parties than the mainstream parties differ among each other (Van der Wardt, 2015, p. 841). The definition of issue entrepreneurs thus includes decidedly Eurosceptic parties, such as the Freedom Party (FPÖ) in Austria, but also parties such as *Die Linke* which diverges in its position on the EU from all other parties in Germany in the time period studied, but would not necessarily be classified as Eurosceptic in other partisan contexts. Whether a party can be classified as an issue entrepreneur thus always depends on its position vis-à-vis other parties in the party system at hand at a given

point in time. There are thus differences in the extent of Euroscepticism of the issue entrepreneurs: it can be strong or ‘hard’ (for example in the case of the FPO) or rather moderate and ‘soft’ (for example in the case of *Die Linke*) (Taggart and Szczepiński, 2002, p. 7). Moreover, the presence of an issue entrepreneur in the political system, even though not represented in the national parliament, can have a substantive impact on how European issues are debated and scrutinised by mainstream parties. The United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) in the United Kingdom is a case in point here. Issue entrepreneurs can be positioned on opposite sides of the political spectrum. Usually they can be considered as extreme right wing parties, such as FPO and the Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZO), or as ‘hard left’ parties such as *Die Linke* in Germany. The different issue entrepreneurs studied here are summarized in Table 17.

**Table 19:** *Types of issue entrepreneurs.*

<b>Party</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Euroscepticis m</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Ever in Gov</b>
BZO	Austria	Right	soft	opposition	Yes
FPO	Austria	Right	hard	opposition	Yes
Die Linke	German y	Left	soft	opposition	At subnationa l level
Sinn Fein	Ireland	Left/Nationalis m	hard	opposition	No*
Irish Independent s	Ireland	Left/(Right)	various	opposition	No
UKIP	UK	Right	hard	Not in parliamen t	No

\* *Republic of Ireland*

The strategies issue entrepreneurs employ can be classified according to different parliamentary venues. In the plenary, they are likely to frequently engage in debates on European issues and use these debates to fundamentally criticize the

government's position towards the EU or the EU membership of the country as such. In committees, they frequently initiate resolutions on EU related issues criticizing the position of the government. Moreover, issue entrepreneurs sometimes use extra-parliamentary venues to attack the EU position of the government, for example by legally challenging the legitimacy of EU-related policies. Given that issue entrepreneurs are by definition very rarely members of government coalitions and engage in 'fundamental opposition', their activity is mostly aimed at communicating their position to their Eurosceptic electorate. Even though issue entrepreneurs differ in their opposition to Europe, what is relevant for their role in driving parliamentary activity is their position on the EU vis-à-vis the other parties represented in the respective national parliament. Substantively, the criticism of issue entrepreneurs depends on their political stance: right-wing parties criticize the loss of sovereignty whereas left-wing parties focus on the economic consequences of the Treaty and on the lack of involvement of European institutions.

The different types of issue entrepreneurs nevertheless use the same strategies (see Table 18). By being active communicators, they try to establish ownership of an issue, in this case EU affairs (Dahlberg and Martinsson, 2015, p. 826). Being perceived as 'owning' an issue has positive effects for challenger parties, since they become featured more often in the media and are thus more visible to the electorate (Van der Brug and Berghout, 2015, p. 882). Issue entrepreneurs appeal to their Eurosceptic voters in debates and criticize the government on fundamental issues relating to EU affairs which are not necessarily related to the actual topic discussed. In committees, they are likely to initiate a large number of resolutions, which are routinely rejected by the other parties. Strong activity of issue entrepreneurs or ideological polarization in committees

is thus likely to increase activity, but might actually diminish effectiveness by clogging up the committee and by focusing on ideological debates instead of technical issues on which parliament could actually have an impact.

The Fiscal Compact has proven to be a very divisive issue for parties throughout Europe. Internal dissent is understood here as a situation when an MP or a group of MPs makes speeches, issue statements or votes against the official position of the party leadership. The criticism can be nuanced or fundamental. According to the competing principals theory (CPT) internal dissent arises when MPs are faced with diverging preferences of their two principals, the voters and the party leadership (Carey, 2007). Being perceived as divided can have very detrimental effects and can even lead to party death, so the party leadership will try to avoid dissent from becoming apparent (Kam, 2009). Steenbergen and Scott find in an analysis based on expert surveys that Europe is salient for parties with low divisions, less salient for those with a medium level of internal division on the issue and very salient for highly divided parties (2004, p. 186). Spoon confirmed these findings in an analysis of party manifestos (2012, p. 10). A similar pattern could also be expected for the treatment of the Fiscal Compact.

Parties tend to adopt issue entrepreneurial strategies if they are coherent on the issue in question (Hobolt and De Vries, 2015, p. 19). If mainstream parties are divided, we can expect them to refrain from public activities which might make these divisions apparent. The party leadership might thus try to prevent 'rebel' MPs from speaking in the plenary. However, if a substantial faction of the government majority revolts, the threat of defection can be seen as a highly effective means of influence for backbench MPs. Issue entrepreneurs, on the other hand, can be expected to instrumentalise these

divisions in other parties by relying on Europe as a ‘wedge issue’ (Van de Wardt, De Vries and Hobolt, 2014, p. 997).

The behaviour of mainstream parties themselves is very important in determining the potential success of new challenger parties or issue entrepreneurs (Meguid, 2008, p. 30). Specifically, the behaviour of the spatially non-neighbouring party (for example the Labour Party in the case of UKIP or the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union [CDU/CSU] case of *Die Linke* in Germany) is of crucial importance (p. 32). Meguid finds that a niche party has most chances of success when (in a spatial model with three parties) one mainstream party is dismissive of the claims of the challenger party and the other adversarial (p. 33). Parties which are closely associated with a particular issue benefit from that issue being topical at a particular moment according to saliency-based theory (Budge, 2015, p. 767). Mainstream parties might thus try to use an issue which was championed by issue entrepreneurs to cover it themselves in the form of issue convergence as a reaction to the activity of issue entrepreneurs (Walgrave, Tresch and Lefevre, 2015, p. 779). It will be more difficult for issue entrepreneurs to establish ownership of an issue if mainstream parties also compete on it (Dahlberg and Martinsson, 2015, p. 829).

Mainstream opposition parties are often as divided on Europe as government parties. Therefore, they might also refrain from active scrutiny in this situation. However, when the agreement of (mainstream) opposition parties is necessary for the adoption of a legal act due to supermajority requirements, mainstream opposition parties can have considerable influence on some aspects of the governments’ position or might negotiate favours in other areas (Puntscher Riekmann and Wydra, 2013, p. 656). These ‘side payments’ for the opposition are common in negotiating international

agreements and can in some cases improve the overall bargaining outcome (Rector, 2011). They can also be used to secure agreement from smaller coalition partners (Lindvall, 2010).

In contrast to issue entrepreneurs, mainstream parties are generally part of a pro-European consensus (Puntscher Riekmann and Wydra, 2013, p. 579). Since the ability of parties to rapidly switch their position on issues is constrained by both internal factors and the voter's reactions, mainstream opposition parties cannot attack the government and become active in the same way as issue entrepreneurs do (Budge, 2015, p. 772). Moreover, in proportional representation (PR) systems, they might anticipate to become (again) part of a coalition in the future so they might not want to increase their framing distance too much from the coalition partner by being too active on a controversial topic (Van de Wardt, 2015, p. 862).

**Table 20:** *Strategies employed by the different actors in the scrutiny process.*

<b>Type of Party</b>	<b>Scrutiny Activity</b>	<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>Mechanism</b>
<b>Issue entrepreneurs</b>	High	Low → try to influence public opinion (sometimes modify message depending on audience) → try to appeal to MPs at the fringes of mainstream parties to defect	Debates, resolutions, extra-parliamentary means
<b>Mainstream opposition</b>	Low (nuanced position, generally supportive of government)	Moderate → high when government needs support in domestic implementation	Side-payments in domestic implementation, second chambers
<b>Government majority</b>	Low, strong when dissent is very high	High → indirect anticipation of preferences	Indirect pressure, dissent

## Method and Case Selection

Methodologically, this paper relies foremost on document analysis (parliamentary debates and reports as well as newspaper articles). In addition, to contextualise the findings, fourteen semi-structured interviews which were conducted between May and July 2014. The interviews were carried out in person, over the phone or via email questionnaires. Since the purpose of this paper is to uncover the exact mechanism which issue entrepreneurs use to influence parliamentary scrutiny of the Fiscal Compact and how mainstream parties react to their activity, an in-depth qualitative approach was the most promising research strategy. Each interview lasted about forty-five minutes. Most interviews were conducted via the telephone. A complete list of interviews can be found in Appendix 9.

The interviewees were selected in order to provide a good spread between the different types of parties (issue entrepreneurs as well as mainstream opposition and government parties). Moreover, two members of upper chambers (the House of Lords and the Irish Seanad) were interviewed. While the focus of the thesis is generally on the activity of lower chambers, members of upper chambers are in a unique position as knowledgeable yet somewhat removed observers of the scrutiny process. Moreover, some second chambers, such as the House of Lords and the German Bundesrat played an active role in the treatment of the TSCG. However, the relatively small number of interviews and their uneven distribution across countries and parties clearly limits the extent from to which generalisations can be drawn from the interviews alone. Their purpose was thus overall to cross-check findings from the document and newspaper analysis and to gain additional contextual information.



Four countries were selected for analysis in the case study: Austria, Germany, Ireland and the United Kingdom. These four countries were chosen because of their variation on a number of important institutional variables, different party systems and in particular a different manifestation of issue entrepreneurs. While Germany and to a lesser extent Austria can be described as ‘creditor’ countries, Ireland was strongly affected by the Euro crisis and was in need of a bailout. Some authors found that countries in receipt of financial aid from the Troika seemed to be generally very active when scrutinising crisis related legal acts (Auel and Hoeing, 2014, p. 13). The UK, by contrast, is a non-Eurozone member and has thus an ‘outsider’s view’ on the Fiscal Compact, but is still indirectly affected by it. This additional variation will make it possible to analyse different forms of parliamentary activity with regard to the TSCG. Ireland is the only country in which a referendum was required for the ratification of the Treaty.

Moreover, Ireland is the only country in which a referendum was required for the ratification of the Treaty. This was required by a decision of the Attorney General that the Fiscal Compact implied significant changes which were covered under the conditions formulated in the “Crotty” judgement of the Irish Supreme Court in 1987 (Sunday Business Post, 18 December 2011). The judgement stated that a referendum was required when a treaty changed ‘altere[d] the essential scope or objectives of the [European] communities (ibid.)’. Therefore, a situation can be analysed in which parliament is not the only ratifying institution, which adds another relevant dimension to the analysis and had a strong impact on the behaviour of issue entrepreneurs and thus on the activity of parliaments as a whole, as explained below.

The Fiscal Compact Treaty was signed on 2 March 2012 by 25 EU governments (the EU 27 states excluding the UK and the Czech Republic) and entered into force on 1 January 2013. The Treaty was in many ways a reaction to the sovereign debt crisis of many Eurozone member states. Its main aims are ‘to foster budgetary discipline, to strengthen the coordination of economic policies and to improve the governance of the Euro area’ (Besselink and Reestman, 2012, p. 1). The TSCG remains outside of the EU treaty framework (Ioannou, Leblond and Niemann, 2015, p. 161). However, it is envisaged to be incorporated into the framework by 2018 (European Commission, 2012). Treaty changes at the European level are often dominated by the ‘core executives’ (Dyson and Featherstone, 1999, p. 14). The decision-making process was characterised by a rather weak role of supranational institutions and followed rather an intergovernmental logic, as stated by Chang (2013). The Treaty is thus a least likely case or ‘crucial case’ (Eckstein, 1975) for active parliamentary involvement. According to Gerring ‘[T]he crucial case is a most difficult test for an argument and hence provides what is, arguably, the strongest sort of evidence possible in a nonexperimental, single-case setting’ (Gerring, 2007, p.232).

The TSCG is especially suitable for the purpose of this paper because it contains provisions, which are of immediate relevance for national parliaments (Besselink and Reestman, 2012, p. 5). The Fiscal Compact has thus potentially a very strong impact on each country signing it, in effect limiting the leeway of economic policy in the future. Therefore, it can be assumed that the national parliaments will have scrutinised the Treaty thoroughly, making it a suitable case of high parliamentary involvement/salience. It has to be acknowledged that the Fiscal Compact as an international treaty represents a special case of parliamentary scrutiny and not all

patterns of activity can be transferred to more day-to-day forms of scrutiny. However, crisis related measurers clearly dominated the ‘European’ work of MPs in the last six years. In general, all parliaments can be expected to be more active in the case of the Fiscal Compact or the Euro-crisis in general compared to the scrutiny of regular legal acts. However, interviews showed that the same mechanisms and strategies described in this paper for the TSCG are also at work in the scrutiny of regular legal act.

### **Activities of National Parliaments in Scrutinising the Fiscal Compact**

#### *The Role of Issue Entrepreneurs and their Communication Strategies*

The main argument of this paper is that issue entrepreneurs were stimulating parliamentary activity by enticing mainstream parties to become active in the scrutiny of the Fiscal Compact. In the following, it is explained which strategies issue entrepreneurs used to generate public attention and to influence the position of mainstream parties. Issue entrepreneurs were clearly very active in all four countries. They engaged actively in debates and initiated a large number of resolutions on the fiscal compact. Only issue entrepreneurs clearly and coherently opposed the Fiscal Compact on a general level (Interview 6B). In so doing, they received a lot of media attention.

This became especially obvious in the Irish Case with Sinn Féin, which received a strongly disproportionate amount of air time compared to its seat share (The Journal, 26 February 2012). Sinn Féin was also most skilful in exploiting exploiting the fact that a referendum on the issue was held. The party tried to take ownership of the issue and

portrayed itself as the driving force behind it. Arguably, the referendum thus reinforced the position of issue-entrepreneurs in driving parliamentary activity in the form of debates. In the eyes of government and mainstream opposition MPs, the work of Sinn Fein consisted mostly of ‘making noise’, and their work in the committee was not necessarily of technical value (Interview 1C). A media report described the actions of Sinn Fein as ‘parliamentary pyrotechnics’ (Sunday Independent, 4 March 2012). Nevertheless, Eurosceptic and anti-austerity parties were able to draw a lot of public and media attention from the discussion of the fiscal compact in Ireland (ibid.). Sinn Fein Leader Gary Adams suggested a public debate between him and the Taoiseach on the issue of the referendum, which was however rejected (Irish Daily Mail, 30 May 2012).

The Irish case thus again highlights a recurring theme: issue entrepreneurs do strongly increase parliamentary activity in EU affairs, but often fail to contribute to parliamentary impact – or are indeed even detrimental to the latter – even more so when additional salience is lent to an issue in a referendum. Their main aim seems to be to get public attention, media resonance and to signal to their voters. Sinn Fein seems to have been successful with this strategy, as its perceived leadership of the ‘No’ campaign. This finding is in line with arguments in the literature that owning an issue increases the public visibility of niche parties (Van der Brug and Berghout, 2015, p. 882). However, Ireland is the only country covered in this study in which a referendum on the Fiscal Compact was held. In contrast to Sinn Fein and smaller Irish left-wing parties in Ireland, issue entrepreneurs in other countries could not benefit from such an event which drew additional attention of the public. Therefore, they had to focus more on parliamentary debates or extra-parliamentary forms of engagement such as court cases or public demonstrations.

Issue entrepreneurs can also drive activity if they are not represented in parliament, as in the case of UKIP until 2014<sup>7</sup>, which dominated the discourse in the media and significantly influenced the strategy of the Conservatives and to a lesser extent of the other mainstream parties. A Labour MP acknowledged that UKIP was ‘dominating the debate on Europe’ in the last Parliament (Interview 1D). A Eurosceptic Conservative MP also agreed that ‘UKIP (...) leads the debate’ (Interview 2D). Therefore, even though UKIP was not represented in the House of Commons, its presence in the political system and in the media put it in the position of an ‘extra-parliamentary issue entrepreneur’, which had considerable impact on how the issue of Europe was treated by the other parties represented in parliament, and especially by the Conservative Party.

In contrast to mainstream parties, issue entrepreneurs concentrated a significant part of their effort on extra-parliamentary forms of activity. Public demonstration against the Treaty were organised by BZO, FPO and *Die Linke* to build up pressure on the government (Der Standard, 27 June 2012; TAZ, 28 June 2012). These parties also challenged the TSCG in the Constitutional Courts of their respective countries (Der Standard, 8 March 2013; Der Spiegel, 29 June 2012). Their activities set issue entrepreneurs apart from mainstream opposition parties in that they complement their parliamentary activity with other forms of activism.

Most interestingly, issue entrepreneurs relied on the Fiscal Compact as a ‘wedge issue’ to divide mainstream parties. The aim was to make agreement to the Treaty more costly for mainstream opposition parties, as a party worker for *Die Linke* acknowledged (Interview 6B). The strategy became most obvious in the case of the United Kingdom,

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<sup>7</sup> In October 2014 Conservative MP Douglas Carswell defect to UKIP and subsequently stepped down to trigger a by-election. He was subsequently elected for his constituency of Clacton as a UKIP MP.

where both government and opposition MPs acknowledged the issue ownership of UKIP for this topic and the difficulties this posed with regard to dissenters in their own ranks (Interviews 1D, 2D, 3D).

While the different type of issue entrepreneurs all showed similar patterns of activity, there were marked difference with regard to their substantive focus. Left-wing issue entrepreneurs, such as *Die Linke* or various small left-wing parties in Ireland focused on the economic impact of the Treaty with regard to strict deficit rules and debt reduction (Interview 6B). By contrast, right-wing issue entrepreneurs such as BZO, FPO and UKIP focused especially of constitutional questions of sovereignty. In the words of an FPO MP, the Treaty represented a ‘coup against the constitution’ (Nationalrat 164. Sitzung, p. 137). A distinctive position was occupied by Sinn Fein in Ireland, which focused on both economic and constitutional criticisms (Dáil Debate 29 February 2012, p. 406).

It thus becomes clear that issue entrepreneurs mostly relied on controversial and active engagement in plenary debates, extra-parliamentary forms of influence such as legal action and demonstrations as well as an active use of parliamentary instruments such as resolutions or questions. A particular approach of issue entrepreneurs was to have a dual communication strategy to appeal to the general public on the one hand regarding concerns of parliamentary sovereignty and to their particular extreme left- or right-wing constituents over questions of economic justice and the threat of a loss of national sovereignty on the other. In so doing, they also tried to foster divisions in the spatially neighbouring mainstream parties by appealing to voters and MPs on the fringes of the mainstream parties by using Europe a ‘wedge issue’ (Van de Wardt, De Vries and Hobolt, 2014, p. 997).

### *The Reaction of Government Parties to the Activity of Issue Entrepreneurs*

How then did the government parties react to the activity of issue entrepreneurs and their attempts to use the Fiscal Compact as a ‘wedge issue’? As Meguid has found, the success of niche parties which occupy new issue dimension depends crucially on the behaviour of the mainstream parties themselves in reaction to the new entrant (2008, p. 30). Mainstream parties have three different strategies at their disposal: dismissive, accommodative and adversarial (ibid.). When using a dismissive strategy, mainstream government parties can be expected to be least active since this strategy entails ‘non-action’ towards the activity of the issue entrepreneurs (p. 28). The overall activity of parliament can also be expected to decrease since the salience of the issue is likely to diminish while the issue entrepreneur maintains ownership of the issue (p. 30).

Elements of this strategy could be observed in a number of cases covered in this paper. In Austria, the government parties justified the Fiscal Compact in rather defensive and functional terms against the attacks of issue entrepreneurs. The Fiscal Compact was framed by the governing parties SPO and OVP as a necessity to prevent future debt-related problems in Europe (Nationalrat 146. Sitzung, p. 146). In Ireland, the Taoiseach was accused by his own backbenchers of defending the fiscal compact and the ‘Yes’ vote in the referendum not forcefully enough (Irish Daily Mail, 7 May 2012). The Fiscal Compact was thus not actively explained, but rather ‘defended’ in the light of current economic necessities against the attacks of the issue entrepreneurs.

Another strategy employed by mainstream parties is the ‘accommodative’ approach. When using this strategy, mainstream parties emulate the niche party’s position (Meguid, 2008, p. 28). The aim then is to take over voters from the niche party and according to Meguid, when voters will indeed desert the niche party for a

mainstream party with a similar policy stance – issue ownership will transfer to the mainstream party (p. 28). This strategy will lead to an increase of issue salience and thus to overall more parliamentary activity (p. 30).

An accommodative position was chosen by the Conservative Party in the United Kingdom. An Eurosceptic MP stated in an interview that he saw the use of EU institutions in the context of the Fiscal Compact a typical example of the European Union's frequent breaches of legal principles (Interview 2D). The same MP also advocates electoral pacts between UKIP and the Conservative party (ibid.). The Conservative Party thus tried deal with the threat of UKIP by taking a similarly Eurosceptic stance on the Fiscal Compact – a successful 'accommodating' strategy according to Meguid (2008, p. 30). The activity of the Conservative backbenchers was thus an attempt to re-establish ownership of the issue from UKIP and thus a reaction to the latter party's activity (Dahlberg and Martinsson, 2015, p. 829). Government parties were thus not actively driving the parliamentary treatment of the Fiscal Compact, but reacting to issue entrepreneurs. However, as mainstream parties join the issue entrepreneurs in talking about an issue, both its salience and parliamentary activity in the matter increase (Meguid, 2008, p. 30).

The final option for mainstream is to adopt an adversarial strategy in which the mainstream party explicitly 'declares its hostility to towards the niche party's policy stance' (Meguid, 2008, p. 29). This strategy is supposed to strengthen the niche parties' ownership of the issue (p. 30). Since the mainstream party actively engages in the debate on the issue, its salience is set to rise (ibid.). We can thus also expect an increase in overall parliamentary activity. An adversarial strategy was chosen by the German government consisting of CSU/CDU and the Free Democrats (FDP). The government



defended the Fiscal Compact and described it as an indispensable means to prevent future crises in Europe. Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble stated that the Fiscal Compact showed a ‘fundamental change in mentality in Europe’ with regard to fiscal discipline and underlined its interconnectedness with the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) (Bundestag, 172. Sitzung, p. 20211). In the UK, the junior coalition partner, the Liberal Democrats, followed an adversarial strategy. Some Liberal Democrat MPs saw themselves clearly as a counterforce to the Eurosceptic MPs in the European Affairs Committee and therefore attended the Committee meetings regularly. One Liberal Democrat MP stated: ‘I want to be there to put on a fight when needed’ (Interview 3D). In the UK, cooperation in the Committees did not always take place along party lines, since Europe has become an increasingly divisive and politicized issue in the British context. This ideological polarization seems to hamper the effectiveness of parliamentary involvement in EU affairs in the UK.

### *The Bargaining Strategies of Mainstream Opposition Parties*

In many respects, mainstream opposition parties were in an even more difficult position than government parties. While they had the same strategies at their disposal as government parties to deal with the activity of issue entrepreneurs, they still had to differentiate themselves from the government. Moreover, they were generally pro-European and tried to defend their credentials on this position (Puntscher Riekmann and Wydra, 2013, p. 579). Mainstream opposition parties were thus unwilling to mobilise against the government on EU matters as issue entrepreneurs do since they want to avoid awakening the ‘sleeping giant’ of European integration in domestic politics. Van

der Eijk and Franklin claim that European integration is an issue on which European voters hold meaningful attitudes (2007, p. 37). However, their alignment on this dimension cuts across the left-right axis (p. 39). Voters have thus no possibility to vote according to their preferences on this dimension as far as mainstream parties are concerned (p.42). Mainstream opposition parties therefore also want to avoid mobilising voters on this dimension since this would expose internal divisions on this issue (p. 48).

Some mainstream parties decided to implement a dismissive strategy towards issue entrepreneurs and consequently were not very active. An example for this is the Labour Party in the UK. Many MPs recognized that UKIP represented a similar threat to them as for the Conservatives (Interview 1D). Moreover, the party has no clear stance of Europe at the moment (ibid.). In the context of the current Eurosceptic political climate and the threat of UKIP, the strategy of the party could be described as ‘lest said, soonest mended’ (ibid). As a consequence, the Labour Party was thus rather reluctant in terms of activity in the form of debates. A similarly dismissive strategy was employed by *Fianna Fáil* in Ireland. *Fianna Fáil* as a ‘mainstream’ opposition party generally supports the government, and only tries to differentiate itself on relatively minor or procedural points. However, *Fianna Fáil* found it difficult to communicate its position between supporting the government and demanding more far-reaching changes (Irish Examiner, 2 March 2012). This situation is typical for mainstream opposition parties and often hampers their activity.

An accommodating strategy was chosen by the Green Party in Austria, which sided with the issue entrepreneurs BZO and FPÖ in its rejection of the Fiscal Compact. The Green Party thus criticized the Fiscal Compact from a supranationalist/democratic deficit point of view, but also from a left-wing economic position (Wendler, 2014b, p.

562). The Greens appealed to their particular constituency by favouring growth stimulating policies at the European level, while not agreeing to further disciplinary measures in the form of the Fiscal Compact. This became especially obvious since the Green Party agreed to the ESM, but not to the Fiscal Compact. The Green Party had thus the particular role as a mediator between government and issue entrepreneurs and joined BZO and FPO in legal action against the Treaty – a role rarely played by mainstream opposition parties but viable when applying an accommodating strategy (Interview 1A). In Germany, mainstream opposition parties also stressed the necessity of more growth enhancing policies (Maatsch, 2014, p. 112; Pedrazzini and Pinto, 2013, p. 17) and increased integration (Closa and Maatsch, 2014, p. 840). The accommodative strategy made the opposition active in the treatment of the Fiscal Compact, contributing to overall parliamentary activity. It also shows that mainstream opposition parties had to strike a balance between acknowledging the claims of issue entrepreneurs and differentiating themselves from the government without giving up their general support for the Fiscal Compact and European integration. In some cases, this enables them to hold a position which bridges the difference between governments and issue entrepreneurs.

No mainstream opposition party engaged in a clearly adversarial strategy. This is not surprising with regard to the effect of the interaction of mainstream party strategies and their impact on the activity of issue entrepreneurs identified by Meguid (2008, p. 34). These patterns are also likely to have an impact on overall parliamentary activity in EU affairs. When both government and opposition mainstream parties are dismissive, as in the Irish case, the impact of issue entrepreneurs will be limited. If a mainstream party is dismissive and another one accommodative, as in Austria, the impact of issue

entrepreneurs is set to diminish as well. By contrast, when one mainstream party is accommodative and other adversarial, as in the UK, the impact of the issue entrepreneur increases. Finally, if one party is adversarial and the other accommodative, the impact of the issue entrepreneur will depend on whether the accommodative or the adversarial strategy is stronger. In the German case, the adversarial strategy of the government was stronger than the accommodative impact of the opposition, so that the impact of the issue entrepreneur increased.

It thus becomes clear that mainstream opposition parties found themselves in a very difficult position. They were generally more pro-European than the government but were faced with an increasingly Eurosceptic public opinion. They ran the risk of being squeezed between issue entrepreneurs with their aggressive rhetoric on the one hand and the arguments of the government on the other. Moreover, they want to avoid becoming too active on a controversial topic since increasing their 'issue distance' too much might hamper their plans for future government participation (Van de Wardt, 2015, p. 844). The German SPD is a case in point here. However, when their approval was needed to ratify the Treaty mainstream opposition parties could have some real influence on the government's position or secure 'pork' in the form of side-payments on other issues (Rector, 2011). Nevertheless, some mainstream opposition MPs voted with the issue entrepreneurs against the Treaty. In the following, the causes and consequences of internal dissent within parties on the TSCG as well as the interplay of this lack of cohesion with public opinion is examined.

### *The Interplay of Internal Dissent and Public Opinion*

Issue entrepreneurs were the only parties which remained cohesive on the issue. There was significant dissent within some government parties, such as in Germany and the United Kingdom. In Germany, four per cent of FDP MPs and two per cent of CDU/CSU MPs voted against. Interestingly, the leadership of CDU/CSU, SPD and Greens attempted to change the allocation of speaking times in the Bundestag so that the party leadership had more control over individual MPs (Hamburger Abendblatt, 16 April 2012). Especially the FDP leadership was a vocal advocate of these measures, which was then however abandoned due to protests from numerous MPs and criticism from the President of the Bundestag (Der Spiegel, 16 April 2012). This indicates that the party leadership already anticipated internal dissent and was trying to prevent it from becoming public in plenary debates. Another example of even more extreme internal dissent within government parties was the United Kingdom. The Eurosceptic Chairman of the European Union Scrutiny Committee in the House of Commons, William Cash (Conservatives), triggered an emergency debate on the Fiscal Compact Treaty. However, the Fiscal Compact itself was not extensively discussed in the debate. Instead, the future of the UK in the European Union and the latter's perceived undemocratic nature formed the core of the debate. As the Conservative MP John Redwood noted 'This debate is about democracy itself' (House of Commons 29.2.2012, Column 319). William Cash called the Treaty 'unlawful' (ibid.). An Eurosceptic MP stated in an interview that he saw the use of EU Institutions in the context of the Fiscal Compact as a typical example of the European Union's frequent breaches of legal principles (Interview 2D).

Even though, as explained above, they were to a large extent reacting to extra-parliamentary pressure from UKIP, the Conservative backbenchers formed had a strong impact on parliamentary activity. Given the extremely strong level of dissent within the Conservative Party, it was not possible for the Prime Minister and the party leadership to contain the voices anymore, even though it tried to do so.

The extent to which the MPs felt public pressure with regard to the Fiscal Compact varied greatly. According to a CDU MP, the conservative public in Germany (*'Buergerliche Oeffentlichkeit'*) supported the strict fiscal rules of the TSCG so that 'The Club Med countries won't be able to tear everything down again' and 'we won't have to pay for the sins of others again' (Interview 5B). Fiscal discipline in Europe was thus the most important issue perceived by the public (Interview 2B). There was thus a stronger pressure with regard to the Fiscal Compact on the centre-right coalition parties. Arguably, the Fiscal Compact was less pertinent for the left-wing mainstream opposition parties, who would also have agreed to rescue measures without the Treaty. However, the interest from the general public in this matter and in EU affairs in general was rather limited (Interview 5B).

Ireland was in many ways a special case in this regard. In Ireland, the governing *Fine Gael* party realized that their constituents who often come from a business background supported the austerity measures (Interview 1C). In general, the ratification of the TSCG in Ireland took place under particular circumstances for two reasons. First, the Irish Constitution required a referendum for the ratification of the Treaty, which required an amendment to the Constitution. The referendum was initially supported by Fianna Fail and Sinn Fein, while the government was at first reluctant (Irish Examiner, 14 December 2011). However, the Attorney General decided that the impact of the

Treaty was significant enough for a referendum to be required (The Guardian, 28February 2012). The referendum took place on 31 May 2012. The voters clearly spoke out in favour of the Treaty, with 60.29% approving it while 39.71% voted against (Eurobarometer, 2012b). Generally, economic considerations such as access to bail-out funds seemed to have played an important role for those who supported the Treaty, whereas opposition to the government and distrust of politician seem to have been the most important factors for those voting against (ibid.). The fact that a referendum was held had significant implications for the parliamentary scrutiny of the Treaty since parliament was not the only ratifying body in the Irish case, with the electorate having a direct say in the matter. Second, Ireland was one of the countries, which were most strongly affected by the financial crisis, given the exposure of Irish banks to an overvalued property market (European Commission, 2014). As a consequence, Ireland had to apply for assistance from the EU and the IMF, since the rescue packages for the banks further increased the budget deficit (ibid.). The country received overall 67.5 Million Euros, half of which from the European Union, consisting of loans in the context of the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF), the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) and of bilateral loans (ibid.). Thus, as a recipient country, which was hit very hard by the financial crisis, the TSCG was discussed in Ireland in a particular political climate and was of extremely high salience. A particular focus of the debates in the plenary and in committees has been the impact of the TSCG on future public spending and in particular on the health care system (Interview 1C). Thus, the special importance of the Fiscal Compact for Ireland led to a situation in which relatively little internal dissent within parties occurred (ibid.).

In the other member states, virtually all parties studied here were thus divided on the fiscal compact to some extent in the sense that there were at least a few party rebels who voted against the Treaty. Both government and mainstream opposition parties faced this problem. The party leadership often tried to suppress this problem by trying to prohibit the rebels from speaking in the plenary if possible. Issue entrepreneurs often exposed these attempts and tried to highlight the lines of divisions by pointing out the similarities of the rebels' position with their own. Not surprisingly, parties were more divided on the issue where the public was sceptical of the Treaty. In general, strongly divided mainstream parties tried to minimise debate of and engagement with the Treaty.

#### *The Effectiveness of Parliamentary Involvement*

As mentioned above, parliamentary activity cannot be equated with effectiveness. A clear case of effectiveness is evident when parliament manages to influence the position of the government from its initial position (Auel, 2007). Effective scrutiny would thus mean the 'ability of parliament to induce the government to change its negotiation position in a way it would not have done without parliamentary interference...' (p.491.). In a few cases, when the majority requirements necessitate additional support from opposition parties, this could indeed be achieved. The German opposition demanded an accompanying focus on growth-enhancing policies, such as an initiative to combat youth unemployment and a financial transactions tax, which were then later also advocated and agreed to by Angela Merkel (Sueddeutsche Zeitung, 30 January 2012; Der Tagesspiegel, 30 April 2012). Moreover, the opposition thus used the upper chamber as a second channel to suggest changes and amendments to the Treaty



(Interview 1B). As in Austria, the parliamentary opposition was able to exert some influence and secure side payments since a two-thirds majority was required. In the words of an opposition party researcher: ‘The government had to be forced to act’ (ibid.).

When no such majority requirements are in place, however, the extent to which parliament are able to do so, especially in ex-post debates and in the treatment of an international Treaty such as the Fiscal Compact is admittedly limited. As expected, *Sinn Féin* and the independent Eurosceptics were especially eager to challenge the government in the debates and in committees. However, in the Irish case, this activism did not have a strong impact on the government’s policy- given the large majority of the governing parties as well as their internal cohesiveness. Therefore, in the Irish case, strong activity did not translate into ‘effectiveness’. According to a member of the Joint-Committee for European Affairs, the EAC is the weakest committee in the Irish Parliament, and its impact is extremely limited – not only with regard to the Fiscal Compact (Interview 1C). Even though *Sinn Féin* and other (left wing) Eurosceptics ‘made lots of noise’, they did not have an impact on the actual work done in committees. Due to a strong whip, it is difficult for backbenchers to criticize their own government in the committee. Arguably, in the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs there is thus ‘lots of activity, but very little impact’ (Interview 1C).

Very high levels of internal dissent can have a substantive impact on the governments’ position. The British veto was likely strongly influenced by the preferences of Eurosceptic MPs within the Conservative Party (The Independent, 10 December 2011), with the time of the veto also coinciding with a slump in David Cameron’s popularity rating and a record number of Britons favouring withdrawal from

the European Union (The Independent, 11 December 2011). The Prime Minister's veto of the Fiscal Compact as a Treaty under EU Law might be seen as an anticipation of preferences of Eurosceptic MPs. A Conservative MP stated that the interest in and salience of the Fiscal Compact for the European Affairs Committee strongly declined after the British veto (Interview 2D). The main function of continued scrutiny of the developments of the Fiscal Compact might thus rather signalling activity to Eurosceptic voters. Faced with the rise of an issue entrepreneur on European issues (UKIP), a substantial minority of government backbenchers could significantly influence the position of the government and was thus very effective in this sense.

Generally, parliamentary activity could only have a limited impact on the government's position in the case of the Fiscal Compact. Exceptions were the German case, where mainstream opposition parties could have some impact on the government's negotiation position in exchange for their approval. In the UK, government backbenchers influenced the government's position significantly. However, in all countries the leeway of mainstream opposition parties and government backbenchers to influence the government's position would have been larger if the constant activities of issue entrepreneurs had not further constrained their room for manoeuvre already narrowed by sceptical public opinion. Thus, parties would have been able to debate the technicalities and particular aspects of the Treaty – such as more growth enhancing policies- in more detail instead of focusing on grand arguments regarding the democratic legitimacy of the Treaty and the EU in general.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

The Fiscal Compact was clearly scrutinised rather actively in the parliaments analysed here, which is not surprising given its tremendous importance. In all countries, issue entrepreneurs were the drivers of activity. They frequently mention the European issue in the debate and relate specific discussion about EU-related issues to more general point about the legitimacy of the European Union and their countries continued membership of it. Issue entrepreneurs use this rhetoric to allude to their Eurosceptic voters, and their points are frequently picked up by the media. In that sense, issue entrepreneurs strengthened in the profile of the Treaty in the public and contributed to parliaments fulfilling their communication function.

With regard to parties, the analysis illustrates the strategies which different types of parties use in the parliamentary scrutiny of EU affairs. All types of issue entrepreneurs tend to use similar strategies to foster activity. In debates on Europe, they speak frequently and connect specific European issues to general points on European integration. They also use extra-parliamentary venues, such as challenging the government's EU related actions in front of constitutional courts. In committees, issue entrepreneurs initiate a large amount of resolutions. However, these activities have rarely an impact on government policy, or any success at all. Issue entrepreneurs employ these strategies to send signals to their Eurosceptic voters. Within parliament, issue entrepreneurs sometimes hope to appeal to MPs on the fringes of the mainstream opposition parties and try to encourage them to defect from the party line. This strategy was however not successful in the cases analysed here. When appealing to a (extra parliamentary) public, issue entrepreneurs focus on different audiences (for example 'right-wing' or more 'general') and modify their messages accordingly. Thus, their

communicative strategy remains rather narrow and focused on particular strata of the electorate.

A particularly relevant finding is that the strategies of mainstream parties - both in government and opposition –in reaction to issue entrepreneurs was crucial in determining overall parliamentary activity. Some mainstream parties, such as the UK Conservatives or the Austrian Greens, were accommodative of the demands articulated by issue entrepreneurs. Others, such as the German CDU/CSU or the Liberal Democrats, had an adversarial strategy of outright attacking the issue entrepreneurs. A third group of parties, such as the Labour Party in the UK or *Fianna Fáil* in Ireland, remained dismissive of the position of the issue entrepreneurs. Generally, accommodative strategies seemed to decrease the activity of issue entrepreneurs while dismissive or adversarial strategies lead to an increase in activity. The interaction between issue entrepreneurs and mainstream parties is thus crucial in determining overall parliamentary activity in EU affairs against the background of changes in public opinion.

With regard to the formal powers of national parliaments in EU affairs, an impact on scrutiny activity could not be established. The Irish Parliament, which is said to have rather weak formal scrutiny powers, was clearly rather active. A combination of strong issue entrepreneurs, little internal dissent and high topicality, enhanced by a referendum on the issue, might be the reasons for this. The Austrian parliament also showed strong scrutiny activity, also due to strong issue entrepreneurs and little dissent in the context of a Eurosceptic public. The UK parliament displayed a relatively high level of activity even though the UK is not a member of the Eurozone. This seems to contradict arguments focusing on the macroeconomic situation of a country in

explaining activity in crisis related measure. In the UK, UKIP as an extra-parliamentary issue entrepreneur had an impact on how the issue of Europe was handled by the mainstream parties. In Germany, the moderate level of dissent and weak issue entrepreneur presence led to rather low levels of activity.

Moreover, the analysis yields important lessons for the interplay of activity and effectiveness in the parliamentary scrutiny of EU affairs. In particular with regard to the government control function. Issue entrepreneurs might transform discussions in committees into ideological debates, leaving less room for actual deliberation of specific points which might have a tangible impact on government policy. This point was raised frequently by the interviewees. In general, a strong ideological component in scrutiny work on EU affairs might lead to more activity, but less effectiveness. The impact of committee work on government policy seems to be limited. Given the majority situation in most parliaments, government policy has been agreed in high level negotiations among party groups and is merely approved by committees. Nevertheless, the negotiations arguably took place in anticipation of parliamentary preferences which pre-structured the way the negotiations could be conducted. However, interviewees frequently expressed dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of committee proceedings. Moreover, in the last half decade, the financial crisis has overshadowed almost all other EU related activities.

Mainstream opposition parties are most likely to have an impact in the form ‘effective’ parliamentary scrutiny. However, this is notably only the case when the government needs the votes of the opposition for the ratification of a legal act, as for example the case with the ESM in Austria or in the case of the TSCG in the German Bundesrat. The impact of the governmental majority is mostly indirect, with the

government anticipating the Eurosceptic backbenchers' preferences, as for example in the case of the British veto on the TSCG. In this particular case the preferences of a faction of government backbenchers, was highly significant. In the case of an international treaty like the Fiscal Compact, parliaments can generally be expected to be less influential than in the case of 'normal' legal acts (Peterson and Bomberg, 1999). However, as became obvious from interviews, the general patterns of activity and effectiveness were the same for the Fiscal Compact; crisis related measures based on secondary law and in the case of regular EU legal acts.

On a normative level, the findings have important implications for the extent to which stronger parliamentary activity can actually lead to more democratic accountability and effective parliamentary control in the European Union. If issue entrepreneurs largely drive activity, and if their presence makes parliamentary scrutiny more ideological and less effective, increased parliamentary activity might not necessarily be seen as purely positive with regard to the democratic deficit debate. At least, it is necessary to differentiate between the source of parliamentary activity and its impact on parliamentary work as well as between different parliamentary functions. While issue entrepreneurs clearly communicate EU-related topics quite actively, they largely speak to particular, ideologically narrow strata of the public. With regard to the actual scrutiny function; their criticism is often not targeted and in-depth. An institutionalised forum for cooperation of national parliaments in EMU matters as suggested by some authors would likely be dominated by the same dynamics, with issue entrepreneurial activity fostering a nationalistic point of view from the right or an outright opposition to further centralization of economic and monetary control from the left. Mainstream parties would have to balance these pressures with their need to

support their own governments. Instead of an increase in the powers of national parliaments, a strengthening of the role of the European Parliament in matters of economic and monetary cooperation might thus be more promising.

## Appendix 9: List of Interviewees

*Table 21: Name and function of the interviewees, date and mode of communication*

ID	No	Name	Country	Party	Function	Communication	Date
1A	1	Dr. Peter Steyrer	Austria	Greens	Party Researcher	Skype	14.5.2014*†
2A	2	Christine Muttonen	Austria	SPO	MP (EAC)	Email	23.5.2014
1B	3	Katrina Villalobos	Germany	SPD	Party Researcher	Skype	27.5.2014
2B	4	Dr Florian Hoeppner (for Norbert Barthle MdB)	Germany	CDU	Party Researcher	Email	25.6.2014
3B	5	Dr. Florian Toncar	Germany	FDP	MP (Haushaltsausschuss)	Skype	26.6.2014*
4B	6	Thomas Doerflinger	Germany	CDU	MP (EAC)	Skype	1.7.2014*
5B	7	Klaus-Peter Willsch	Germany	CDU	MP (Haushaltsausschuss)	Skype	3.7.2014
6B	8	Alexander Ulrich	Germany	Die Linke	MP (EAC)	Email	15.7.2014
7B	9	Lisa Paus	Germany	Die Gruenen	MP(EAC/Finanzausscuss)	Skype	15.9.2014
1C	10	Colm Burke	Ireland	Fine Gael	Senator (EAC)	Skype	19.6.2014
1D	11	Michael Connarty	UK	Labour	MP (EAC)	In person	12.6.2014
2D	12	Jacob Rees-Mogg	UK	Conservative	MP (EAC)	In person	24.6.2014
3D	13	Mike Thornton	UK	Liberal Democrats	MP (EAC)	In person	26.6.2014
4D	14	Lord MacLennan of Rogart	UK	Liberal Democrats	Lord (EAC)	In person	8.7.2014



## **Conclusion: The Determinants of the Activity of National Parliaments in EU Affairs and their Implications**

This thesis has set out to investigate which factors determine the scrutiny activity of national parliaments in European Union affairs. In so doing, it has shown that the presence of issue entrepreneurs, Eurosceptic parties for which Europe is salient, internal party cohesion and the interplay of these two factors with public opinion on European integration can explain variation in scrutiny activity. The formal powers of national parliaments do not have a strong impact on activity in the form of debates and resolutions. These findings can explain the puzzle why the formal powers of national parliaments in EU affairs and their actual scrutiny activity diverge. Moreover, the activity brought about by issue entrepreneurs is highly politicized and might thus make parliamentary scrutiny less effective than it could be by preventing parliaments from sufficiently engaging with the technical details of legal acts. The idea that a further empowerment of national parliaments will lead to more democratic accountability thus has to be reconsidered. In the following, the empirical and theoretical contribution of this thesis is elaborated on. Moreover, the limitations of the thesis are acknowledged and potential avenues for future research are sketched out. Finally, the normative implications of the findings of the thesis with regard to democratic accountability in the European Union and the debate on the democratic deficit are outlined.

## **Empirical Contribution**

Empirically, this thesis contributes to the literature on national parliaments in European Union affairs by collecting a large amount of original data on the activities of national parliaments relating most directly to the communication and government control function, debates and resolutions. The datasets were then analysed using statistical techniques such as multilevel-models and computer-assisted content analysis. Moreover, more than fourteen semi-structured elite interviews were carried out to provide qualitative evidence. The thesis thus employs a mixed-methods approach. By focusing on six countries (Austria, France, Germany, Spain, Ireland and the United Kingdom) and a time period from the 1990s until the 2012, the thesis also sets itself apart from previous work by its geographical and temporal scope. The countries represent a good spread over the most important independent variables tested in this thesis, such as the presence of issue entrepreneurs, party cohesion and public Euroscepticism. However, the generalizability of the findings is of course still limited and future research could cover a larger number of countries, as explained below.

The thesis presents two original datasets on parliamentary activity in the form of debates and resolutions. The first paper draws upon more 3084 transcripts of parliamentary debates in five parliaments. An analysis of such a large number of parliamentary debates for their reference to European affairs has not been undertaken before. For the second paper, more than 3466 resolutions were collected from the parliaments' websites. The present thesis not only analyses the number of resolutions, it also provides the first analysis of the valence of resolutions, i.e. the extent to which they are critical or supportive of the government. For that purpose, the resolutions were handed coded on a Lickert-type scale from -2 (very critical) to 2 (very supportive).

Moreover, the structure of the resolutions was analysed as a proxy for politicization. Inspired by the work of Huber and Shipan (2002) on bureaucratic drift, a long preamble and a short operational part was seen as evidence for a lack of depth of scrutiny, since the preamble often only contains general political points related to the EU and few concrete policy recommendations for the legal act at hand. The analysis showed that especially the resolutions of issue entrepreneurs had longer preambles and shorter operational parts – an indication that they use resolutions mostly to criticize the EU as such and not to actually scrutinize EU legal acts with a view to improving the quality of legislation. Combined with the finding that issue entrepreneurs initiate a large number of resolutions, this fact raises questions with regard to the benefit of strong parliamentary activity in terms of democratic accountability, as explained below. This innovative approach is the first attempt in the literature to quantitatively assess the quality and politicization of resolutions of national parliaments in European Union affairs. Moreover, the dataset could be fruitfully used in future research.

For the third paper fourteen in-depth qualitative interviews were undertaken with members of parliament of different parties as well as party workers in four countries. Analysing the parliamentary involvement in the scrutiny of the Fiscal Compact, the paper presents a detailed assessment of the parliamentary treatment of this seminal international treaty. It was shown how issue entrepreneurs also lead the activity – both in the form of debates and resolutions – in the case of ‘history-making decisions’ such as the Fiscal Compact (Peterson and Bomberg, 1999). This paper also shows that the extent to which parliaments can be active in these types of agreements is limited. The interviews provide an in-depth analysis of the motives and strategies of the different actors with a particular focus on the strategies of issue entrepreneurs and the

reactions of mainstream government and opposition parties to the latter. Empirically, the paper thus presents original data which are analysed using both qualitative and quantitative methods, leading to the discovery of new facts about the activity of national parliaments in EU affairs and the relationship between formal powers of national parliaments and their actual activity.

### **Theoretical Contribution**

The main theoretical contribution of this thesis is to provide an explanation of parliamentary activity in EU affairs which is firmly based in party politics. The theoretical approach of the thesis is original in that it brings together and contributes to the literatures on national parliaments in EU affairs, the decline of parliaments in general and party competition. In contrast to other work which mostly focuses on explaining formal rights of national parliaments, this thesis analyses parliamentary activity in EU affairs in a theoretically grounded way. By explaining how the presence of issue entrepreneurs, internal party cohesion and public Euroscepticism influence activity, this thesis provides a theoretically informed account of why the formal powers of national parliaments and actual activity diverge. While party political and public opinion factors determine activity, the formal powers of national parliaments might be the result of normative considerations (Winzen, 2014). The theoretical contribution of this thesis to the literature on national parliaments in the European Union is thus to accompany an institutional focus on formal powers with a conceptual framework

brining in the role of political parties and in particular issue entrepreneurs as agents of activity.

The first paper focuses on the communication function of parliaments (Norton, 1993) in the form of debates and shows how from a theoretical perspectives issue entrepreneurs can be seen as being especially likely to be active in this way given that it is relatively visible to the public and allow actors to inform about the party's stance on an issue (Auel and Raunio, 2014a, p. 4). Likewise, mainstream parties can be seen as especially reluctant to appear as divided in very visible forms of activity. The theoretical contribution of this paper could be extended to other topics to show how issue entrepreneurs on a particular topic dominate and trigger debate on the issue and thus heavily foster the communication function of parliament.

The second paper builds on the findings of the first and confirms them with regard to the activity of national parliaments in the form of the government control and scrutiny function (Norton, 1993). This form of activity is generally regarded as less public, so it is theoretically relevant to see that issue entrepreneurs are still very active in this regard. In contrast to debates, the number of resolutions and their valence does not seem to be strongly affected by the extent to which parties are internally divided on Europe, possibly because the resolutions feature less prominently in the public discourse than debates, and appearing divided is thus less harmful for a party. Moreover, it is generally easier for factions of a party or individual MPs to signal dissent in a debate (Proksch and Slapin, 2014). In general, parties are less responsive to Euroscepticism in the valence of their resolutions compared to debates, indicating that party political factors play a more important role. The motions (unsuccessful resolutions) of issue entrepreneurs are often concerned with general political points and

not with the actual legal act at hand. From a theoretical point of view, this calls into question which form of activity can actually be considered as ‘scrutiny’ in European Union affairs. What is generally considered scrutiny by national parliaments might actually be in fact a form of political signalling. This finding has also important normative implications, as discussed in the final section of the conclusion. It thus became clear that issue entrepreneurs dominate all forms of activity in EU affairs. This is theoretically interesting since it could have been expected that they focus more on one particular form of activity, such as the more publicly visible debates, given their limited resources. The fact that these parties dominate in both forms of activity further highlights the significance of their role.

The third paper focuses on the micro-mechanisms of the activity of issue entrepreneurial activity in the EU affairs. A particular strategy by issue entrepreneurs is to use Europe as a ‘wedge issue’ (Van de Wardt, De Vries and Hobolt, 2014, p. 997) trying to appeal to Eurosceptic factions of mainstream parties. Moreover, it was shown that government backbenchers play an important role since the government anticipates their preferences. Moreover, mainstream opposition parties can often secure side-payments (Rector, 2001) for their agreement with the government. With regard to the effectiveness of parliamentary engagement in EU affairs, the fact that there is no clear relationship between parliamentary activity and effectiveness is one of the most important theoretical findings of this thesis. Strong politicization of the scrutiny process brought about by issue entrepreneurs can lead to less intensive engagement with the topic at hand and thus to general, less in-depth discussion and scrutiny of European issues at the expense of targeted scrutiny.

On a general level, this thesis also seeks to contribute to the literature on legislative studies more broadly defined. The subfield of legislative studies originated in the United States and developed rapidly in the 1970s (e.g. Fenno, 1970, Mayhew, 1974). In the last three decades, it has become dominated by rational-choice individual-level approaches (Martin, Saalfeld and Strom, 2014, p. 10). The advantage of these approaches is their clear focus and the potential to make comparison across political systems (ibid). While this study is firmly situated in a rational-choice institutionalist framework, its findings emphasize the fact that there are qualitative differences between different types of parties with distinct patterns of activity different parliamentary venues, such as in the form of plenary debates or resolutions initiated in European Affairs Committees (or other committees which focus on EU related activities, depending on the particular scrutiny system). When issue entrepreneur parties are present, the general pattern of activity of the legislature in question is strongly influenced by them and mainstream parties modulate their behaviour accordingly. Therefore, in policy areas in which issue entrepreneurs exist and are vocal- besides European integration, immigration is relevant here – parliamentary activity is not ‘business as usual’. Following from this, and mirroring the argument recently made by Lapinski with regard to the US Congress that ‘policy issue substance is critical for understanding contemporary and historical law-making’ (2013, p. 18) this thesis argues that legislative studies scholars focusing on European parliamentary systems could benefit from the insight that the nature of certain highly contentious issues influence the activity of parliamentarians per their divisiveness and salience, and beyond particular institutional constraints and procedures in place in the case of EU affairs. Therefore, it is important to understand the behaviour of different types of parties with regard to particular issues,

and the incentives and constraints they face respectively. In this context, the differences between issue entrepreneurs and mainstream parties are arguably more important than between government and opposition. The incentives, constraints and opportunities of issue entrepreneurs differ significantly from both mainstream government and opposition parties. This aspect has frequently been ignored in the American literature due to the US two-party system, and has also been absent from the EU studies literature and in particular with regard to the role of national parliaments in EU affairs

Moreover, the thesis also seeks to contribute to the literature on party politics and niche parties. Building on the work of Hobolt and De Vries (2015) and Meguid (2008), the thesis shows that when issue entrepreneurs bring a new topic to the parliamentary arena, mainstream parties react to it, raising overall levels of activity. The interplay of issue entrepreneurs and mainstream parties is thus essential to understand when and how an issue becomes prominent in the parliamentary arena. Studying and conceptualising issue entrepreneurs is thus not only relevant to understand the strategies and success of new and/or extreme parties, but also to improve our knowledge of the reaction of mainstream parties to new issues prominent in the party systems and the strategies of mainstream parties to deal with these changes. A pertinent question is what happens to issues championed by issue entrepreneurs once mainstream parties can no longer suppress the topic and engage with it. This question is particularly relevant after an issue entrepreneur party successfully mobilizes on a new topic in the run up to an election in which it was successful. Mainstream parties might then be forced to take on the issue themselves, even if it is in a half-hearted manner. Examples for this type of behaviour include the pledge of the UK Conservative Party to hold a referendum on EU membership in the aftermath of the success of UKIP in the 2014 EP elections or the



adoption of an anti-atomic energy stance by Angela Merkel's CDU/CSU after the German Greens became the strongest party in the regional election in *Baden-Wuerttemberg* in 2011 in the wake of the Fukushima disaster. This phenomenon has been termed 'issue uptake' in the US context (Sulkin, 2005). After a while, a new issue might become 'mainstreamed' (see Gattermann et al., 2013 on the mainstreaming of EU affairs). There might thus be a situation where there is no more asymmetry in parliamentary activity induced by the strong focus of issue entrepreneurs on the topic and the attempts to suppress it by mainstream parties. Political competition might return to 'business as usual' and the dynamics of parliamentary activity no longer differ from other issue areas. However, given the ever changing and developing nature of the European Union, with new issues arising and becoming intertwined with it (as happened recently in the context of the refugee crisis) such a situation is unlikely to arise anytime soon with regard to EU affairs. The impact of issue entrepreneurs will therefore remain strong and the nature and extent of parliamentary activity in EU affairs is likely to continue to differ from other policy areas.

All in all, this thesis thus makes a theoretical contribution to the literature by bringing in the incentives of different types of parties in the study of national parliaments in the European Union and by providing a new perspective on the role of parliaments in the EU in the context of the democratic deficit.

## **Limitations and Potential for Future Research**

This thesis focuses on parliamentary activity in the form of debates and resolutions from the 1990s until the 2012. It introduces two novel dataset on parliamentary debates and resolutions in EU affairs respectively. In the following, it will be explained how the scope of the present thesis could be extended and how alternative research methods could be applied to the existing datasets. Moreover, it will elaborate on new avenues of research to which the theoretical findings of the thesis give rise.

A general limitation of this thesis is of course that the number of country cases is relatively small (only six out of the 28 EU member states were analysed). A particular limitation is that all of the countries included are Western European. No country from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) was included in the analysis. This fact certainly limits the generalizability of the findings of this thesis and future studies should ideally focus on the impact of issue entrepreneurs on parliamentary activity in CEE in particular. However, there are also valid theoretical and empirical reasons to exclude CEE from a study of limited scope. First, at the theoretical level, the party systems in Eastern Europe are still relatively in flux (Tavits, 2008, p. 537). This would make application of the concept of 'issue entrepreneurs' with regard to their 'framing distance' (Van der Wardt, 2015, p. 841) as defined in this thesis problematic. It would not be clear which party constitutes an issue entrepreneur. Second, on an empirical level, over time data for countries from CEE with regard to parliamentary debates and resolutions are simply not available. Moreover, several datasets used in the analysis, such as CHES, do not cover the countries from Central and Eastern Europe for the whole time period. Thus, these empirical limitations could potentially be overcome in the

future, and the theoretical concepts could be adapted to fit an analysis of parliamentary activity in EU affairs in this region. Such a study would represent a highly pertinent contribution to the study of national parliaments in European Union affairs. In the following, the individual limitations of the respective papers are explained.

In the first paper, the activity of national parliaments in the form of debates was analysed. While the analysis at the parliamentary (aggregate) level is very useful to study the interaction between issue entrepreneurs and mainstream parties, it would be desirable to further increase the scope of the party level analysis in the future to analyse the particular activity of issue entrepreneurs in the different countries. To break down the debates into individual speech segments for an extended time period, additional researchers would have to be involved in the project. However, the existing dataset and corpus of debates itself ample opportunity to be used in future research. Potentially, advanced text analysis techniques such as WordScores or WordFish could be applied to analyse differences in the valence of the framing of the EU in the speech acts by different parties (see Proksch and Slapin, 2014 for an overview). Moreover, the current dictionary could be expanded to extend the analysis to other policy areas, to compare EU affairs with other policy areas or in order to analyse the relative importance of certain constituent policies (EMU, Justice and Home affairs, etc.) over time and between countries.

The second paper focuses on the activity of national parliaments in the form of resolutions and draws on a dataset consisting of 3466 resolutions from five countries. It would of course be desirable to further increase the number of countries covered, ideally to the entire EU 28. This was not feasible in the context of this thesis. However, the existing dataset could very well be analysed using additional techniques such as

WordScores to cross check the findings of the hand-coding regarding the valence of resolutions to further underline the robustness of the findings. Moreover, there are also limitations inherent to the chosen approach as well. Besides an analysis of the quantity of the resolutions and their valence, the particular purpose of the different types of resolutions could be analysed. For example, an analysis could distinguish between resolutions directly aimed at the government and those providing a ‘Schelling conjecture’ (Schelling, 1960), a situation in which the government is supported to improve its negotiation position in the Council (Finke, 2014).

Parliamentary debates and resolutions are certainly not the only instruments national parliaments have at their disposal to become active in EU affairs. Indeed, there are many other relevant forms of activity, such as parliamentary questions (Navarro and Brouard, 2012), reasoned opinions in the context of the early warning system (Gattermann and Hefftlar, 2015) and parliamentary reports. However, as explained in detail above, debates and resolutions are arguably the clearest embodiment of the communication and government control function of parliament in EU affairs respectively. As such, they have also been focused on in other works on parliamentary activity (Auel, Rozenberg and Tazea, 2015; Rauh, 2015). By contrast, the focus of, for example, parliamentary questions, is much more variable and contested (Martin and Rozenberg, 2014, p. 1). The focus of the thesis thus allows an analysis of the ‘core activities’ of national parliaments in EU affairs, from which the general levels of activity as compared to their formal powers can be inferred. However, there are certainly aspects and nuances of parliamentary activity – notably with regard to inter-parliamentary cooperations in the form of the EWS – which have been left out. However, empirical analysis of parliamentary activity in that domain have so far rather

painted a disappointing picture with regard to the extent to which national parliaments are actually successful in using this instrument (e.g. Buzognay and Stuchlik, 2011). The core focus on debates and resolutions thus remains a justifiable and well considered choice.

While the thesis has established that issue entrepreneurs are the drivers of the activity of national parliaments in European Union affairs, it would be very interesting to analyse the exact mechanisms at play and the scope conditions of their activity. There is thus potentially a problem of endogeneity with regard to the effect of public opinion on the activity of issue entrepreneurs. Future research will thus have to address a potential shortcoming of the analysis of this thesis: the question of causality with regard to the extent to which public Euroscepticism brings about the emergence and activity of issue entrepreneurs or vice versa. Answering this question is especially pertinent given the relatively long time period covered in this thesis. Previous research has clearly shown that Eurosceptic elites can mobilise public opinion on Europe (De Vries and Edwards, 2009). More generally, it has been shown that public Euroscepticism and elite Euroscepticism are reinforcing processes (Steenbergen, Edwards and De Vries, 2007). While the present thesis clearly confirms that the interaction of public Euroscepticism and issue entrepreneurs parties is highly significant, it can not give definite answer on the direction of causality.

An approach to overcome this problem would be to investigate what happens in terms of parliamentary activity when an issue entrepreneur is first elected to parliament or strongly increases its vote share. This could be analysed using the synthetic control method (Abadie and Gardeazabal, 2003). The approach could be applied to parliaments at the subnational level, the European Parliament as well as national parliaments. A

particularly pertinent case could be the recent success of *Alternative fuer Deutschland*, (AfD), which is currently represented in several German *Landtage*, in most of which no Eurosceptic party was present beforehand. When using the synthetic control method, the researcher compares the development of a ‘treated’ unit (in this case one of the *Länder* in which the AfD was elected into parliament) with a synthetic unit constructed by weighing other units which have not received treatment (the ‘donor pool’, in this case the other *Länder* in which the AfD is not present in parliament) but are otherwise similar to the unit which has received treatment (Abadie and Gardezabal, 2003). The impact of the presence of the AfD as an issue entrepreneur on how Europe is debated in the Brandenburg *Landtag*, for example, and how the mainstream parties react to the issue entrepreneur could then be compared to a synthetic Brandenburg in which the AfD did not make it into parliament. The synthetic Brandenburg would be constructed from the other *Länder* according to varying weighted variables, depending on the similarities between other *Länder* and Brandenburg. This approach would be superior to simple regression analysis comparing the *Länder* in which the AfD is represented in parliament with those parliaments where it is not present, since the synthetic *Land* will be more similar to the *Land* with AfD presence than any other Land in terms of the independent variables (such as public Euroscepticism, party system, economic factors etc.) and the dependent variable pre-intervention (i.e. the extent to which Europe was discussed in the plenaries of the *Landtag* before the rise of the AfD). This will make it possible to access the causal relationship between parliamentary activity of issue entrepreneurs and public Euroscepticism.

All in all, this thesis provides promising starting points for future research further integrating the study of the role of national parliaments in the European Union

with the mainstream of party politics and political behaviour. This will make it possible to analyse in more detail under which conditions MPs have incentive to become active in European Union affairs and when voters favour such activity. A continued focus on the actual activity of parliaments in European affairs and the reactions and preference of the voters in this matter will help us to understand better how democratic representation in the multilevel political system of the European Union works and could be improved.

### **Normative Implications**

The findings of this thesis have relevant implications for the future role of national parliaments in the European Union, democratic accountability in the EU as well as for the debate on the democratic deficit. It is generally accepted that European integration has led to a decrease of the powers of national parliaments by benefiting the government in negotiations across different levels of government, shifting law law-making to the European level, generating information asymmetries which favour the government and by shifting the focus to certain policies which the government supports at the ideational level (Holzhacker, 2002; Maurer and Wessels, 2001; Moravcsik, 1994). Nevertheless, national parliaments have been able to regain some of power and have thus been able to ‘fight back’ (Hix and Raunio, 2000).

Consequently, there have been strong hopes that national parliaments could help to ameliorate the democratic deficit of the European Union – an alleged lack of democratic accountability in the EU for a variety of reasons (Weiler et al., 1995, Hix and Follesdal, 2006). (Re-)Strengthening national parliaments has been discussed as a

potential solution to this problem, especially with what has been called the ‘procedural’ dimension of the democratic deficit (Jensen, 2009). These approaches focus in particular on electoral, governance and deliberative aspects of democracy the EU level (p. 2). Arguably, national parliaments could help to increase democratic accountability in all of these three areas, for example by parties mobilising on EU issues, committees scrutinising the government in EU affairs and EU topics being debated in the plenary. Strengthening formal powers of national parliaments was seen as an avenue to increase their involvement in EU affairs and hence to make the EU more democratic (Maurer and Wessels, 2001, p. 435). And, indeed, the formal powers of national parliaments have been increased significantly throughout the EU in the past two decades (Winzen, 2012). The increase of these powers has taken the form of setting up European Affairs Committees in all member states as well as improved information and control rights (ibid.).

However, as described in detail above, activity of national parliaments is brought about mostly by issue entrepreneurs and not by formal powers. Moreover, the activity brought about by issue entrepreneurs is often not concerned with particular legal acts, but with general and often unrelated points about the European Union in general. This implies that an increase in activity can actually have a negative impact on the quality of parliamentary scrutiny and hence on democratic accountability. Since formal powers do not seem to have an impact on actual activity, further increasing those powers might not necessarily help to make the EU more democratic. The impact a further empowerment of national parliaments might have on democratic accountability might thus be overstated, and a further strengthening of the powers of the European Parliament might be the better alternative.



It is important to note that the impact of issue entrepreneurs on parliamentary activity differs by parliamentary function. National parliaments are reactive to the preferences of the voters in debating EU affairs, and issue entrepreneurs play an important role in bringing about this debate, which is desirable from a normative point of view in the context of the debate on the democratic deficit. In that sense, they contribute to the fulfilment of the communication function of parliament. However, they do so indirectly inciting other parties to talk about Europe, since they appeal mostly to a narrow stratum of the public sympathetic to their arguments in their own debates. Nevertheless, the abovementioned negative effect on the depth and detail of scrutiny leads to a less positive assessment of the impact of issue entrepreneurs on the government control or scrutiny function. With regard to this aspect of parliamentary activity, the impact of issue entrepreneurs might thus be seen as negative from a normative point of view.

As Paper 3 shows, the strong role of issue entrepreneurs and nationalistic discourse means that establishing a new body consisting of national MPs to oversee EMU matters or increase inter-parliamentary cooperation in that regard, as for example proposed by Bellamy and Weale (2015, p. 272) might not be advisable, since this new institution would be subject to the same dynamics as currently national parliaments. It could be expected that such a body would remain rather ineffective and limited to rather general discussions as it is currently the case with COSAC (Cygan, 2013, p. 177). Other forms of horizontal parliamentary communication, such as the EWS, are also rather limited in their success (e.g. Buzognay and Stuchlik, 2011). It is thus unlikely that an inter-parliamentary body in a highly contested policy area could work efficiently. The same can be said of a 'red card' which would allow national parliaments to block EU

legislation as proposed in recent Op-eds (Booth, 2014; Terry, 2014) Further increasing the collective formal powers of national parliaments and enabling them to issue a 'red card' would likely not be practical given the divergence between formal powers and actual activity analysed in this thesis.

There is arguably one aspect of activity in which national parliaments could play an important role. As has been shown, especially when issue entrepreneurs are present, national parliament can become quite active in debating EU affairs and are responsive to changes in the preferences of the electorate. Potentially, national parliaments should focus more on this aspect of parliamentary activity in EU affairs. By so doing, they could foster the extent to which citizens are informed about European issues and engage with them. The government control or scrutiny function could then be fulfilled by the European Parliament, which is arguably in a better position to carry out technical scrutiny. On the other hand national parliaments are better placed to fulfil the communication function, since the media coverage of the EP is still somewhat limited (Gattermann, 2013, Wendler, 2014a).

With regard to the long standing claim of the 'decline of parliaments; (Andersen and Burns, 1996; Blondel, 1970; Heidar and Koole, 1996; Lindseth, 2010, Mazey 1979) this thesis argues that what might look like a decline in the European context, as a consequence of 'Europeanization' or the influence of the EU more broadly defined, might in fact be the beginning diffusion of various parliamentary tasks (such as the communication or scrutiny function) across various levels of governance in a multilevel parliamentary field (Benz, 2013; Crum and Fossum, 2009; Jancic, 2012; Neyer, 2014) or even across different types of institutions in a political system such as the European Union. In other words, the functions which traditionally have been united in the

institution of the sovereign national parliament might have been split up between different levels and across institutions. For example, the law-making function might increasingly been fulfilled by the Council with the European Parliament as co-legislator, the scrutiny or government control function is largely fulfilled by the European Parliament while the national parliaments are in the best position to focus on the communication function and can in this capacity help to make the EU more democratic. Previous studies have acknowledged the particular suitability of national parliaments to publicly communicate EU related issues, thereby increasing transparency (Auel, 2007, p. 504). Moreover, research has found that parliaments specialize in different aspects of EU related activity, so that some are more active in the form of debates while they are weaker on other issues (Auel, Rozenberg and Tacea, 2015, p. 286). The present study underlines this point and develops it by arguing that given the crucial role of issue entrepreneurs and Euroscepticism in bringing about activity in EU affairs in national parliaments and the dynamics resulting from this phenomenon, national parliaments should focus on the communication function while leaving other parliamentary functions to other levels and institutions. This thesis thus argues that the institution of 'Parliament' does not necessarily decline. For each of the traditional functions of Parliament to be fulfilled in an adequate way, they might have to be further split and clarified between different institutions in a multilevel system. Different parliamentary functions might thus best be carried by different institutions in the European Union to make it more democratic.

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